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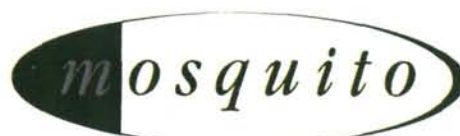


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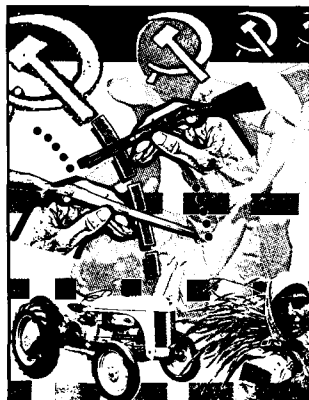
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Two parallel developments are in the process of transforming our continent. 1992 and the creation of a single market will give a quite new momentum to the evolution of the European Community. At the same time Gorbachev's determination to bury the postwar international settlement and with it the old cold-war division of Europe could exercise an equally profound impact on the shape of Europe as we know it.

Britain has never worn its European hat with much enthusiasm. And the Left has been no exception. But there is now a dawning recognition that the old insularity will no longer do. Unless we change, we will be cast in the role of spectators rather than actors in a process of extraordinary historic importance which will be one of the great themes of the 90s.

This issue is devoted in its entirety to Europe. It takes the broad view not the narrow view. It deals with 1992 and Brussels, but it also discusses the relationship between Western and Eastern Europe. It takes the long-term view as well as the short-term view. It is about the future of Europe. Finally, it is not simply about the Europe of the politician, but about tv, food, fashion and identity: the Europe of the people.

If there is any message it is this. The old insularity will no longer do. The old defence of national sovereignty is burnt out. The European Community is here to stay and we are a part of it. Unless we engage with it, we will have precious little influence over its future shape, and a declining influence over the destiny of our island. ●

Debbie Liam Mason

Market-Makers

You've seen the ads, you've heard the hype. Now's the chance to discover what 1992 amounts to behind the hard-sell. We begin with our guide to the basics: the processes and people who will bring Europe to our doorsteps

Europe's Sea Change

What has made 1992 possible is the agreement of European Community (EC) member states, nearly two decades after the founding Treaty of Rome, to carry out its original aims: political and economic union. The instrument for executing this decision is the Single European Act (SEA), which since 1987 has been the legislative backbone of the effort to bind together the Western European nations. The SEA allows the development of a single Euro currency system, with its clumsy-sounding unit of money, the ECU. Research and technology collaboration, foreign affairs co-operation, environmental protection powers and more supranational decision-taking are all within the scope of the SEA. But despite this range of provi-

sions, one aspect of integration has dominated the agenda: the internal market.

The 'completion of the internal market', as the jargon has it, involves the EC in implementing some 300 measures which will remove various barriers to free trade and guarantee the free movement of people within EC boundaries: by December 31, 1992.

Physical frontier controls will be removed, tax advantages between countries ironed out and technical barriers — the range of specifications, procedures and standards which stop goods and services freely circulating — will be ended or harmonised. A massive exercise in deregulation? A free market gone mad? Or simply a process of re-writing the rules to meet the needs of an increasingly internationalised capitalist economy? ●

3D Delors

Jacques Delors is about the closest there is to a superstar on the Euro Left. A fine performance at last September's TUC Congress won him admiration and some British converts to his approach to European integration. For Delors represents the human face of the single market: it is he, as President of the European Commission, who has focused attention on the 'social dimension' measures which promise to mitigate the grimmer social effects of 1992.

The EC has always had social policy objectives. But Delors has provided a political impetus designed to set in place a framework of rights and social policy regulations to parallel the sweeping economic change. These would cover health and safety at work, support for disadvantaged groups, more



training programmes, minimum standards for work conditions, and bigger allocations to the social and regional funds. In principle, it means EC involvement in parental leave, part-time workers' contracts, employees' use of VDU screens, fire prevention in the workplace, equal pay, development money for the poorest southern European regions, trade union consultation rights and much more. In practice all these things will be the subject of political battles within the various decision-making bodies of the EC, with no certain pre-ordained outcome. ●



ABC of QMV

Quite a Major Victory for common sense. After years of insisting that consensus must be the basis for all decision-taking, the EC Council (government ministers from each member state) has finally allowed itself to vote. The SEA allows a good number of the 1992 proposals to be decided on by qualified majority voting (QMV) in the EC Council, thereby ending the ability of any one country to veto progress. Small wonder Mrs T is working on a plan to screen the forest of proposals com-

ing from the upstart EC Commission for Council approval. If the Whitehall lawyers can push proposals into categories still needing unanimity, the British can use their veto and Canute may yet hold back the SEA.

ps: a 'qualified' majority is 54 votes out of 76. Britain, France, West Germany and Italy each score 10 votes. Spain has eight, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece and Portugal five, Ireland and Denmark three and Luxembourg two. Unlike *jeux sans frontières* there is no joker. ●

Mind The Gap

Coming up fast on the inside track of Euro jargon is the 'democratic deficit' or 'democracy gap' as it is sometimes translated. This useful shorthand sums up growing concern at the imbalance of power wielded by the various EC institutions. In short, the directly-elected European Parliament is little

more than a consultative watchdog, compared with the 'civil service' commission which originates all EC measures or the behind-closed-doors decisions of the Council of Ministers. As the truly supranational supplants the national arena, it is becoming clear just how underdeveloped are the mechanisms for democratic intervention in the EC. ●

ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VOTING TURNOUT IN EACH COUNTRY (%)

Country	1979	1984
Belgium*	91.4	92.2
Luxembourg	88.9	88.8
Italy	84.9	83.4
Greece*(1981/84)	78.6	77.2
West Germany	65.7	56.8
France	60.7	56.7
Denmark	47.8	52.4
Netherlands	58.1	50.6
Ireland	63.6	47.6
United Kingdom	32.3	32.6

*Voting is compulsory

Matter Of Opinion

You could be forgiven for not having noticed that we're in a pre-election period. But on June 15, Britain and Northern Ireland go to the polls to elect 81 Euro MPs (MEPs) for a five-year term which will take us through the 1992 changes.

Betting types might care to lay odds on whether the UK can beat its own unchallenged record for non-voting: two-thirds of us decided not to bother with Europe in the last two elections (see above). But

EC is even more divisive in Denmark (see below).

Despite the ad campaigns we remain unconvinced of the merits of 1992, with only 47% declaring the single market a good thing. Interestingly Luxembourg, France, Germany and Denmark also lack majority conviction in the benefits of 1992.

As for the detailed policy implications of a more federal Europe, 71% of us would favour a common defence organisation (EC countries' average is 72%). But we are

Attitudes to European Unification (Autumn '88)

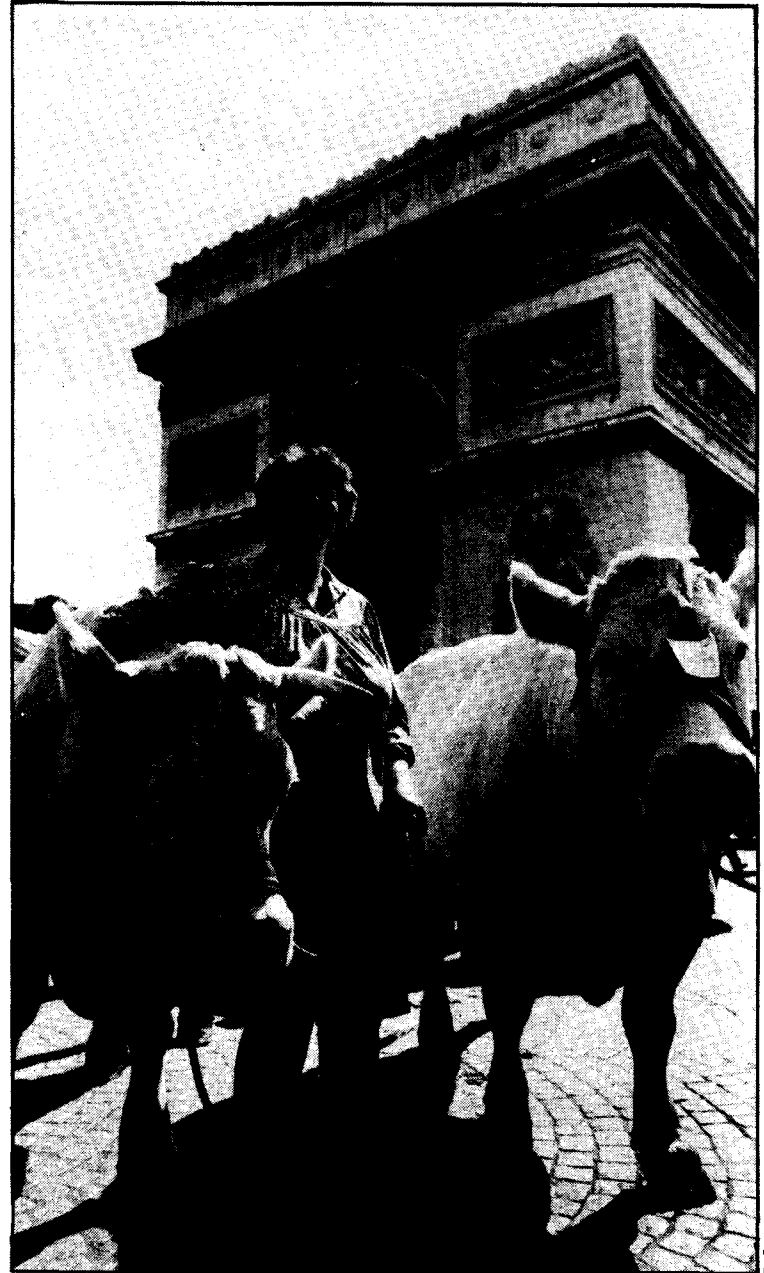
		Britain	Denmark	EC12
For	(%)	61	53	79
Against	(%)	26	43	12

is it ignorance or antipathy which keeps us away from the ballot-box?

EC public-opinion surveys during 1988 show that despite 68% of us being aware of 1992 and the single market (just below average awareness for EC countries), we have a marked reluctance to endorse greater federal European power.

We aren't alone however: the

loathe to relinquish control over foreign policy – and even more so to give up our currency! Asked if they were for or against creating a single European currency, the ECU, 28% of the UK sample said they were while 58% gave it the thumbs-down. The Italians have no such qualms, giving the ECU an overwhelming vote of confidence by 77% to 8%. ●



Reflex

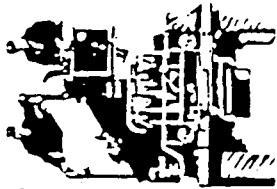
River Deep, Mountain High

We don't hear so much about the wine lakes and butter mountains any more. But those graphic features of the 1970s' political landscape were the result of the most advanced element of European-level regulation: the common agricultural policy (CAP). Today, a fully federal system operates. Agriculture ministers meet monthly, the sector takes up about 65% of the entire EC budget, and a whole 'green money' system has evolved to smooth out the effect on farm prices of exchange-rate variations. Ironically, it

is the manipulation by national governments of the green currency – to gain an advantage for their domestic farming interests – which is now leading the EC Commission to try and dismantle this element of Euro-planning as part of the 1992 process.

As for the surplus production, the squeeze is being put ever-so-gradually on the worst excesses. But mostly the unwanted produce is dumped at rock-bottom prices on an international market, with dubious benefits to those less developed countries that forsake their own agricultural development for a gift-horse. ●

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V For Vasso

Most people would have to agree that the European Community has been rather a good thing for women in the UK. In a limited way, that goes for all member states: during the 1980s, implementation of EC directives has strengthened poor national provision for equal pay, equal opportunities and equal social security treatment throughout the Community.

These initiatives stem largely from DGV, the EC Commission department (or directorate-general) responsible for social affairs, employment, education and training. From January this year, DGV comes under the control of Ms Vasso Papandreu: the first-ever female Commissioner, a founder-member of the Greek

socialist party PASOK and former government industry minister, with a commitment to women's rights. At the TUC Women's Conference in March, she attacked the British government for blocking the EC's proposed improvements for parental leave. The draft directive which the UK has refused to approve would allow one or other parent three months' leave after the birth of a child to look after it. It's hardly revolutionary, considering that France currently permits 33 months, West Germany 10 months and Spain 9.5 months. The UK has no legal right to parental leave at all.

Britain has also opposed two other important initiatives launched by the EC Commission during the 1980s. The first would give part-time workers



similar rights and protection to that of full-time employees. The second was to extend employment rights to temporary workers. According to *Labour Research* (March '89) the UK has the highest proportion in the EC of women working part-time to full-time, at 45%. There is a real fear that the 1992 process will bring in its wake a levelling-down of employment conditions which will affect women particularly harshly. As the pattern of employment moves increasingly to one based on low-wage part-time work, with minimum job security, there may well be more jobs around for women. Lacking any framework of support for affordable child-care or minimum-wage levels, they are hardly likely to be better. ●

Setting Standards

The Court of Justice in Luxembourg is the backdrop for a series of legal skirmishes which are defining the limits to the 'free' market of 1992. The battles are over the removal or dilution of individual countries' rules for defining product content and standards.

Round One in 1979 went decisively to the free-marketeers. In the now-famous Cassis de Dijon case, a German law defining minimum alcohol content prevented the import of this low-alcohol French liqueur into Germany under the label of 'liqueur'. West Germany's defence was on public health and consumer protection grounds, but the European Court ruled that the EC's free trade principles overrode this. The door was opened for challenges to a variety of 'content' rules, including the Ita-

lians' pasta purity and German beer purity laws, and the French ban on the use of aspartame, an artificial low-calorie sweetener.

Round Two has only just been settled, but represents an important reverse. Denmark has strict rules restricting the import of non-recyclable containers, which had the effect of banning German beer sold in cans and non-returnable bottles. The Court in this case upheld the environmental protection argument advanced by the Danes as more important than the resulting trade restriction. These tussles are of real importance: manufacturers may gain significant expansion of markets and a possible saving on production costs. For the rest of us, the cost of that could be further environmental degradation or weaker regulation of product safety — particularly for our food. ●

Wise Up On 1992

Catherine Hoskyns selects some of the best or most representative of the flood of 1992 material which has recently been produced.

Europe Without Frontiers — Completing The Internal Market European Documentation, 3/1988 (from EC Commission offices in the UK) — The Commission's own succinct and readable account, aimed at the general public, of what 1992 involves.

Research On The Cost Of Non-Europe (The Cecchini Report) — An ambitious study in 16 volumes, co-ordinated by economist Paolo Cecchini, into the costs of not completing the internal market. Contains a mass of useful information, regardless of one's views on the conclusions. A rather euphoric summary is 1992 — **The Benefits Of A Single Market** Paolo Cecchini (Wildwood House, 1988, £6.95). More serious is **The Economics Of 1992 European Economy** No 35, March 1988.

1992 — Myths And Realities JA Kay (London Business School, 1989, £10) — Cool analysis by the LBS which concludes that the impact of 1992 is being exaggerated, given the strength of national differences and traditions.

The Economics Of 1992 H Neuberger (British Labour Group of MEPs, 1989, £25) — A telling critique from a socialist standpoint, of both *The Cecchini Report* and the attitude and policies of the present government towards 1992. May be issued more cheaply later.

The Social Dimension Of The In-

ternal Market European Commission in Social Europe, special issue 1988 — The best account of the, so far tentative, proposals for a social programme to accompany the 1992 measures.

Europe 1992 — Maximising The Benefits, Minimising The Costs (Trades Union Congress, 1988, £2.50) — TUC report on the implications of the 1992 proposals and on the possibilities of campaigning for a 'core of workers' rights' to be incorporated into the programme.

An Opposition View Of 1992: The Myths, The Threats And The Response John Lambert (Agenor, Brussels, Oct/Nov 1988, £2.50) — Far and away the best critique of the politics of 1992 and its implications for the Left.

'The effects of completion of the internal market in 1992 on women in Europe' Marijka Van Hemeldonck (European Parliament Women's Committee, August 1988) — The only publication so far which deals with the gender aspects of 1992.

'Community whitewash — will an integrated Europe exclude the non-white population?' Yasmin Alibhai (The Guardian, January 23, 1989) — Excellent article which raises important issues about the cultural chauvinism and anti-foreigner mentality inherent in the present proposals for 1992.

Reading list compiled from **The Europe 1992 Directory, A Research And Information Guide** (ITCU/Coventry Polytechnic, end-April 1989, £10.95 inc p&p) Available from Coventry Polytechnic's Commercial Development Unit, Coventry CV1 5FB (0203 838727) ●

Marxism Today Coming Next Month

May is the 10th anniversary of the election of Mrs Thatcher as prime minister. In the 10 years since then the face of British politics and society has been transformed. *Marxism Today* has for long been recognised across the political spectrum as the centre of the most acute analysis of Thatcherism. In our May issue we return to the question: what has Thatcherism done? Where is it likely to go now?

Plus an interview with US writer and poet June Jordan.

On sale: Wed, April 26. Order a regular copy from your newsagent now.

1992 1992 And All That

1992 will happen. It won't mean that on January 1, 1993 the world will look much different, but in the longer run it certainly will. **John Grahl** dissects the meaning of 1992



Media success brings certain problems — the European Community has so successfully sold its 1992 programme that it will be hard to meet consumer expectations. When Europeans wake up on January 1, 1993 and ask themselves what has really changed, the results could resemble the more traditional after-effects often experienced on that day of the year. 1992 is not as important as the publicity suggests. But it is important, not so much for what it will do by 1992, as for the way it will influence longer-term developments.

Although tariffs and quota restrictions on internal trade were abolished in the EC 20 years ago, it is obvious that full economic integration is far from being achieved. One reason is that there are many other obstacles to the free movement of goods, services and resources between member countries — the 'non-tariff barriers'. The 1992 programme is a group of some 300 measures aimed at removing these non-tariff barriers by the end of 1992. The European Council (prime ministers and heads of state) agreed the programme in principle in 1985, and it was written into the Single European Act (SEA) which was adopted by all national parliaments in the Community during 1986. The Single Act strengthens the Treaty of Rome which set up the Community, so that carrying out the programme is a legal obligation on all member countries.

Each item in the programme has to be worked out in detail, and then agreed by the Council of Ministers, which is the EC's essential decision-making body. Agreement is made a lot easier because decisions are by majority vote rather than unanimity. In spite of initial scepti-

cism, a large number of the items have been agreed, and it is now clear that most of the programme will go through, more or less on schedule.

The programme is not a model of logical coherence — the EC white paper of 1985 which laid it out was a result of brilliant improvisation rather than long-term strategy. Some of the items included had obviously been mouldering in Brussels filing cabinets for ages, before being thrown into the programme. For example, there are a very large number of detailed agricultural measures, to facilitate movements of livestock and so on. And there are very far-reaching proposals, which the white paper sketches in a few lines.

The white paper identified three types of 'barrier' to the free movement of products and resources: physical barriers — controls and formalities at the frontiers between EC countries; technical barriers — difficulties caused by the various technical standards and regulation systems of the different countries; fiscal barriers — obstacles to free trade and resource mobility caused by incompatible national tax systems. But not all the aspects of officialdom mentioned in the white paper really do block economic relations, nor would removing them all 'complete' market integration or produce a 'single market' because it is not only functions of government such as taxation or regulation which obstruct economic interaction between countries. There are also barriers within the private sector and in society at large. France and West Germany have different economies, not just because they have different tax systems and legal systems, but because they are different societies — with different languages, different traditions,

different ways of doing things. Even if their tax and regulatory systems were completely harmonised, France would not automatically become a 'home market' for West German companies.

Thus 1992 is not a comprehensive programme for full economic integration, as some of the publicity suggests. But it does push integration forward with four major sets of reforms.

The first and most far-reaching set of measures concerns financial liberalisation. Complete freedom to move money in and out of the country already exists in Britain and some other member states. Free capital movements will become EC-wide in 1990 (with temporary exceptions for the very poorest countries), allowing any EC resident to operate a bank account in any country.

Freedom of movement for banks and other credit institutions is also well-advanced: if they are established in one EC country they will be able to operate in any other, without having to satisfy a second set of regulations. Together these measures will make money and credit systems in the Community completely interdependent, although a fully-unified financial system will not be possible while there are still different currencies. The possibilities for national control over interest rates and credit conditions will be substantially reduced.

The second set of reforms tries to open up *public procurement* to Community-wide competition. In each member country the government buys huge quantities of goods and services from private companies — almost 10% of income is generated by selling to government in this way. Traditionally these valuable orders are channelled to domestic suppliers. This is the reason that there are so many companies in Western Europe which produce locomotives, for example. The programme tries to stop this disguised protection of home markets by rules to compel competitive tendering throughout the Community. Telecommunications equipment is one of the key sectors which will be affected. Telephone networks are a public service in most EC countries and, up to now, their purchasing has favoured national suppliers. It should be noted, however, that military procurement (government purchases of weapons and war material) is not subject to the programme.

The third aspect of the programme concerns technical norms, quality and safety standards, and other kinds of *regulation*, including the qualifications which are legally required for some professions like medicine. The programme contains measures to harmonise these standards in many cases, but it also tries to short-cut the complicated process of agreeing EC standards by instead introducing mutual recognition of existing national standards. This may seem a sensible way of promoting international exchange without bureaucracy but it has caused concern as a

'France and West Germany have different economies, not just because they have different tax and legal systems, but because they are different societies'



kind of hidden deregulation. Safety or quality standards for a product or a service in one country could be undermined if imports are allowed from another country with a less exacting system of control. This deregulatory side of the programme certainly recommends it to enthusiasts of the free market. But it is not yet clear whether it will have big effects in practice. In the long run, however, the programme will tend to force close collaboration between member governments when they change standards and technical specifications or alternatively to transfer competence in this area to the EC.

Finally the programme includes measures for *tax harmonisation*, in particular an effort to reduce the present disparities in the rates of VAT which different countries impose on consumer products. Agreement has not yet been reached on this question and its logic seems very tangled. In fact, the existing VAT differences don't affect trade at all because exports are always zero-rated, while imports are treated like home goods. French exports to Britain, for example, are exempt from French VAT but attract the same rate of British VAT as the home products they compete with. The problem, from the EC Commission's point of view, is that the existing procedures require a documentation system for exports — so that they can be zero-rated — and these formalities are reckoned to be a 'physical barrier'. But if the formalities are just abolished, the different rates of VAT will become a problem, because exports will then pay VAT according to their origin, not their destination.

To avoid distorting competition, therefore, the Commission wants to level out rates of VAT. The danger here is that southern European governments, highly dependent on VAT receipts, will cut VAT to stay competitive, depriving their public sectors of resources.

The main significance of this reform is to put tax harmonisation back on the EC agenda, after a long period of stagnation. A key issue will be the model tax-system towards which member states start to converge. Until recently one could assume that harmonisation would aim to replicate in other countries the kind of system that exists in Denmark or Germany: high rates of tax, low levels of evasion, higher tax rates for the rich. Now that view of progress is in doubt.

Just listing the contents of the 1992 programme shows that we are not talking about the elimination of national economies or the emergence of a fully-integrated West European economy. Political debate has focused on two questions: will the programme tend to expand or contract employment? And will it work towards an opening or closing of the EC economies to the rest of the world?

Official EC assessments of 1992 are of course optimistic about its effects. The claim is made that improvements in

efficiency, due to more thorough-going competition, will add about 4.5% to the Community's output. This figure is higher — by an order of magnitude — than those produced by previous studies of trade liberalisation and competition policy reforms. It is similarly claimed that improved cost-structures and more rapid investment will generate millions of jobs without adding to inflation. These figures are equally suspect.

Critics of the programme argue that, in the present climate of slow growth and uncertainty, more intense competition could destroy jobs by encouraging rationalisation and plant closures in industries affected by the programme, without compensating expansion elsewhere. This in fact seems a bigger danger as far as the programme is concerned than the deregulation which is often talked about but now seems very unlikely in practice. The danger is all the greater because national policies to sustain employment will be constrained by the programme itself — especially financial liberalisation — while the development of EC-wide employment policy has hardly begun.

Nevertheless, neither the optimistic nor the pessimistic scenarios seem plausible, and for the same reason: the integration brought about by the programme will be limited, especially in the short run. There aren't big stocks of cheap products held back by fiscal or regulatory barriers and just waiting to flood into neighbouring countries. The real interaction between institutions, change and the behaviour of economic agents will be slower and more complex. Households, firms and legislators will be induced to think in more European terms, to develop a European dimension to their strategies: planning a career, launching a new product, modifying the tax laws. The main exception will be banking and credit: since financial processes are today extremely rapid it is likely that liberalisation will produce Europe-wide reorganisations in a short period of time.

The second issue, the economic openness of Western Europe, pits the free-marketeers against more protectionist views, particularly favoured in France. French views of the programme often stress that it is about completing Europe's *internal* market and thus giving a big advantage to European producers over their US or Japanese rivals. In this view, the priority is to encourage *internal* trade and investment flows *before* external ones. Doing things the other way round would 'dissolve' the European economy into the world market. What sound like cloudy continental notions of the 'European identity' are often sharp expressions of concern about this key economic issue: will there be an identifiable European economy, or just an open zone for the free play of global economic forces?

For the free-marketeers, this kind of thinking leads to the protectionist



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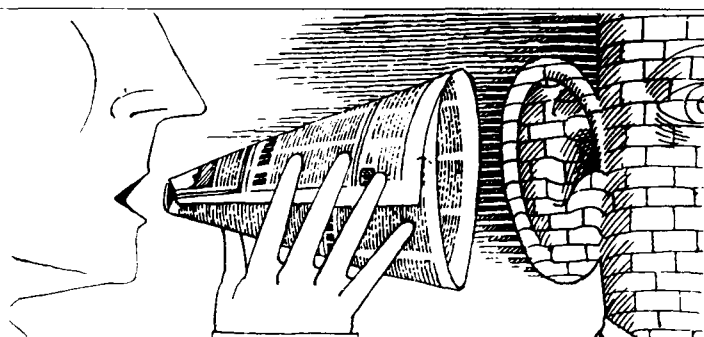
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'What sound like cloudy continental notions of the "European identity" are often sharp expressions of concern about whether there will be an identifiable European economy'



Europe Against The World

The image of a 'Fortress Europe' after 1992 conjures up a continent closed off to the outside world. But for the poorer countries of the world, Europe already limits the most profitable forms of trade open to them. Their real worry is that the rapprochement between states in Europe will present a new challenge: a 'Fortress Europe' not cut off from its surroundings but designed to dominate them instead.

As the single market is put into place, Europe is less dependent on the underdeveloped world than at any time in the last century. Its need for raw commodity imports has reduced as new substitutes for commodities have been developed: 1,000 tonnes of natural vanilla on the world market is now outweighed by 12 times that amount of synthetic vanilla produced in chemical factories in Europe and the USA. At the same time there is a steady world supply of natural commodities, as Third World countries in the grip of the debt crisis have had to promote export of commodities at any cost, in order to gain precious foreign exchange.

The single market is intended to reduce this dependence even further, by internalising trade within the Community and promoting self-reliance within the 12 member states: internal trade is already over half of all EC trade. In contrast, trade between countries in Africa represents only 4% of Africa's trade.

What will the effect of the single market be on poor countries dependent on exporting to Europe? The European Com-

mission claims that 1992 will increase the overall economy of the 12, so that importers will benefit from more buoyant markets: the rising tide should lift all boats. But the most likely change will be an increasing preference for EC goods away from outside imports. This trend has already emerged for products where internal barriers in Europe have already been removed. In textiles, for example, the share of UK imports from the EC has increased by 50% over the last 12 years, while the share from developing countries has declined by 17%, giving the lie to the myth that cheap imports from the Third World are responsible for the decimation of the British textile industry.

The threat of 'Fortress Europe' operates on two levels: of Europe closed to business from poor countries, but also of European domination. However, growing European political and financial co-ordination will make it more difficult for the EC to shirk global issues such as debt, and a stronger Europe could offer Third World countries a more palatable alternative to dependence on the United States and the US dollar.

Poorer countries of the world are aware and wary of the shifts taking place in world markets. Jamaica has argued long and hard within the confines of the international GATT talks that radical free-trade reform of agriculture suits only the biggest exporters the USA, EC, Australia. The 'ACP' grouping of 66 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific is now demanding that the EC consults them on the way that the single market is established. ●

Edward Mayo

heresy of 'fortress Europe'. For them the key objective is not to build an 'internal' market, but to remove all obstacles to market exchange, either internal or external. As far as the 1992 programme is concerned, it is now clear that this free-market interpretation will prevail. Anything that makes it easier to circulate goods or resources among EC countries will also make it easier for big Japanese or US companies to operate in the EC, or to a lesser extent for outside exporters to sell into European markets. An important example is the financial liberalisation, which in fact concedes a long-standing US demand for greater access to the Community for its banks and credit institutions, since US banks will also be able to operate in several countries and move money

easily between them. There have been some French attempts to restrict the benefits of 1992 to insiders, but they have not been supported by many other governments. The theme of the 'European identity' is certainly not dead, but measures to promote *specifically* European interactions will require other programmes and other types of policy. The 1992 programme as such is a free-market programme putting Europeans and outsiders on the same footing.

The recent wave of European merger activity may seem to contradict these judgments, but its actual importance is easy to exaggerate. Adaptation to change is certainly faster in sectors dominated by multinationals, but in many such sectors there already is a high degree of European integration.

Some of the present mergers are likely to be defensive — to avoid more intense competition, particularly for government contracts, big companies are getting together and sharing out markets. Nor is big business going to 'build Europe' — mergers and joint ventures continue between European firms and Japanese or US partners, so that it becomes increasingly difficult to perceive a 'European identity' in enterprises with a global strategy. In the 60s, when West European economies were growing exceptionally fast, multinationals did accelerate European integration by concentrating a lot of their activity in member countries. The general process of internationalisation tended to coincide with European construction. This is unlikely to happen again: other parts of the world will have faster growth than the EC, and this will be reflected in the investment strategies of the big companies.

Since the 1950s, the European economies have been becoming more open both to each other, and to the outside world. The assessment here is that the 1992 programme will reinforce both these trends, but that its full effects will take a long time to develop.

Most of these economic effects lie in the future, but 1992 has already had a big impact on the politics of European integration. After its last major political advance, the entry of Spain and Portugal in 1985, the EC was threatened with stagnation. An ambitious proposal from the European Parliament for a Treaty of Union among member states, which would have moved a long way towards a federal Europe, failed to get off the ground. Right-wing governments in Britain, France and West Germany were resisting further institutional change and refusing to fund new EC spending. The 1992 programme emerged in this climate of free-market conservatism. It promotes integration by purely market methods — relaxing constraints on private business — without involving public spending or new powers for the EC Commission. At the same time other, more interventionist projects were blocked. For example, Commission proposals to introduce some restrictions on employment practices were dropped and the Council of Ministers adopted instead a British-inspired document on labour market 'flexibility'. At this point, 1986 and 1987, the doctrines of the free-market Right were setting the EC agenda.

More recently however, the Commission has used the momentum of 1992 to launch a number of political initiatives which go well beyond market-led integration to develop the supranational institutions of the Community and open up new fields for Community policy. The Single Act itself, a much-diluted version of the Parliament's Treaty of Union proposal, paved the way for some of these changes. The Single Act merely amended the original Treaty of Rome, and in ways which did not much streng-

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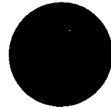
then its institutions, but it did make Community activity legitimate in new fields of policy — not just those involved in 1992 but also on monetary questions, for example. The development of EC monetary powers is now underway again, after a decade of stagnation. The proposals which emerge from the present committee on this subject may well stop short of a fully-fledged European central bank, but they will probably involve a centralised monetary authority with significant powers and are thus likely to put new limits on the exercise of national sovereignty in a key area.

In the wake of 1992, the Community budget has also been reformed and strengthened, unfreezing a number of spending programmes. The EC's 'structural funds', which finance development projects in regions with low incomes or high unemployment, will be doubled up to 1992, so that EC influence on regional policy is moving beyond token level. At the same time the EC has become a major force in technology policy with a more comprehensive and better-funded range of programmes for European collaboration in IT, telecommunications, biotechnology etc.

During the present Spanish presidency of the Council, that is in the first half of this year, there will also be proposals to start building the social 'space' or social dimension of the EC. This is not a design for a European welfare state — which would be impossible because of the huge gap between high-income and low-income countries. Instead, the social space involves a number of other ways to reinforce solidarity in the EC: more redistribution of public money to poorer regions is one aspect; others will be included in a European 'social charter' giving basic employment and welfare rights to everyone in the Community. The charter would cover such things as health and safety, trade union recognition, employee rights to information and consultation, access to national social service and social security systems. A related development is for a European company statute. The basic idea here is to allow companies to register at EC rather than national level, but the new type of registration is also seen as a means of harmonising and influencing company practice — including employment practice — throughout the Community. The electoral victory of the socialists in France last year has given a lot more support to Jacques Delors, president of the EC Commission, in his campaign for the social dimension, and although the British government will try to stop the whole thing, they are isolated on the issue and most unlikely to succeed.

Thus there is a new political dynamic in the Community, deriving a lot of its force from the success of 1992 but moving in a different direction. Integration by market forces is certainly not being challenged as such: but other integration strategies are back on the agenda —

'Democratic control will require elaborate and flexible coalitions and alliances between the political forces of all member countries'



solidaristic social policies, economic interventions, the development of Community institutions. The free-market conservatives no longer control policy-making in the Community, partly because of the change of government in France, and the political troubles of the Right in West Germany, and partly because the intellectual climate is no longer so favourable to free-market strategies. Thus Mrs Thatcher's speech in Bruges last October did not express triumph on 1992 so much as warn against this renewed growth of EC institutions and the encroachment of the EC on national sovereignty.

To sum up, the 1992 programme will accelerate economic integration in Western Europe as well as increasing international economic interdependence in general. Although it will not dissolve national economies into a 'single market' it will significantly narrow the scope for autonomous economic policies at national level. This is particularly true of money and credit policy but also applies to other fields. For example, once VAT rates have been harmonised, it will be impossible in practice for a single country to change its rates; technical norms and regulations will be much more constrained by Community practice; it will be harder to use public orders to private companies as a tool of industrial policy. In general there will be closer links between the national market for each product or service and the corresponding markets in other EC countries, and this will reduce the possibilities of effective control at national level. At the same time a group of political initiatives is strengthening the central institutions of the EC and increasing its scope for action.

Both the internationalisation of our economic life and European political integration are cumulative processes, where each step makes it easier to go on and harder to go back. In practice they are not just irreversible but even unstoppable. If there is to be effective public supervision of the vast private economic forces which operate on an international scale then the EC must become a strong political authority able both to master unruly private interests within Europe and bargain effectively with the US, Japan, and other powerful governments or groupings outside. Democratic control of such an authority will require elaborate and flexible coalitions and alliances.

In the short run it may be necessary and possible to resist certain aspects of the 1992 programme at national level — particularly deregulation or the destruction of jobs by more intense competition — but the only adequate response to the programme as a whole is to strengthen the institutions of the EC and the democratic powers of the European Parliament. At the same time strategies are needed to influence these emerging institutions in specific areas, such as monetary policy and the social charter.

On Your Marks

The largest car market in the world: that's Europe come 1992, with 12.3m cars being bought each year. What will the single market do to the car industry?

The European market is predominantly split between Peugeot, Ford, Renault, Fiat, General Motors, VW and the Japanese companies. As internal trade barriers are removed, intensified competition will drastically squeeze these companies' profit margins and drive the industry down two roads at the same time.

One road leads to greater capital inputs, wider product range and cheaper goods. The other to increased concentration of ownership, relocation of production in the low-wage southern European countries and the transformation of working conditions in existing northern European car plants.

Up to now, the freedom to take advantage of shifting exchange rates, unequal working conditions and divergent wage rates has not been exploited by the nationally-based European companies. Only multinationals like Ford have shifted production from country to country according to local conditions. In the scramble for profits this practice is likely to develop into a process that bids down wages and conditions throughout Europe.

The arrival of Japanese companies in Portugal and Britain has led the European car producers to re-examine their labour relations. Soon, workers throughout the industry will be required to be multi-skilled, non-striking and above all willing to work when the company needs.

That is, unless the trade unions get organised and the EC implements measures to equalise widely-variable working conditions. ●

Unlike any of the other international bodies to which Britain belongs, the European Community does not involve specific, limited commitments. Rather it commits Britain to an open-ended process of ever-closer integration among members. This makes membership of the Community a very dynamic factor in our national life, with a structure that changes and develops as the integration process moves from phase to phase. To respond to the process continual adaptation is needed. The labour movement has, in fact, been adapting to European integration, but because the adaptation is slow while the process of integration is fast, the gap between our positions and the reality of Western Europe may be getting wider. It is important to start narrowing that gap. ●

Working For Patients

How many people will accept the logic of Chris Ham's argument (MT March) that, because there is little evidence in the NHS white paper of a privatisation threat, 'claims that the white paper signals the start of a privatisation strategy are exaggerated'?

Not those inside the DHSS who leaked the highly-damaging late draft to Robin Cook MP, for they have an inkling of a strategy to displace the NHS that bears fruit in the fifth term. Nor is the Tory Right likely to agree, for the white paper contains more elements from the 'No Turning Back' group's manifesto on the NHS than was expected from dampish Health Secretary Kenneth Clarke.

Working For Patients is a visionary plan designed to recapture the political initiative around health for the Conservatives, and is full of woolly thinking and unsubstantiated assertions of unconventional wisdom. Would anyone expect the Conservatives to announce their intentions clearly in such a document?

The key themes seem plain enough. The use of incentives to doctors to make services more responsive to patients is accepted by Chris Ham as a good thing, without any justification of such a demand-led approach, or evidence that financial incentives are the best

answer to whatever impairs service delivery, or philosophical justification that medical care is a commodity suitable for market management. Competition between providers is similarly over-valued as a stimulant to greater efficiency in resource use, again without supportive evidence.

There are positive and intriguing features of the white paper that a progressive government might use, particularly tighter controls over consultants' job descriptions and GPs' prescribing, and possibly in plans for GP budget-holding; but these details hardly offset the context.

For those for whom the NHS is simply a service free at the time of need, and 'mainly' (Kenneth Clarke's qualification) financed from general taxation, the white paper is no threat, at least for the moment and possibly for the next 10 years. But if issues of equity, of prevention, of meeting needs and of empowerment are part of our understanding of the NHS, then much may be lost from the pressure for variation in service quality, and for greater commercial involvement in medical care, built into *Working For Patients*. We might think how its implications, once made public, could reduce the Tory majority in the fourth term and prevent a fifth. ●

Steve Iliffe, London

Breaking Out Of The Impasse

The case for an electoral pact was argued convincingly by Davis and Green (MT February). What is surprising is not the public's support for Thatcherism, but the Labour leadership's inability to face the facts. In spite of unpopular policies, like depriving the health service of adequate funds, the opinion polls show that the Conservatives are consistently 10 points ahead of Labour.

Faced with this message the Labour front bench has settled for a policy of carrying on as before in the hope that things will improve. They are merely following events, rather than taking the initiative and trying to control the situation.

There are two straightforward ways of breaking out of this impasse, and both require a decisive act of political will.

Firstly, they could utilise the next Tory outrage, namely the poll tax, and react positively. If the opinion polls show no significant shift in Labour's favour three months after those extortions have hit the purse of every adult, then they must make an electoral pact of some kind.

Secondly, they could adopt a simpler form of the above method, and say that if the polls do not show a significant improvement after a certain date, then they will need to negotiate a pact with the other opposition parties. It doesn't matter what date is chosen. The mere fact of determining any date will mean that they have decided to stop following the situation and have chosen instead to influence the course of events. Drifting, in the hope of better times round the corner, will get them nowhere. ●

Michael M Winter, London

Healthy And Wealthy

While I agree (MT March) that the government's white paper *Working For Patients* is imaginative and stimulating, and should not be dismissed out of hand; we must not forget where it's coming from.

Last year the government produced its think-tank paper: *Britain's Biggest Enterprise - ideas for radical reform of the NHS*. It was plain that financing health care from the public purse is *not* sacrosanct. Budget-holding practices contracting services from independent hospital trusts seems to me to pave the way for US-style 'health maintenance organisa-

tions' (HMOs) which do just this. Health centres have their own budgets, contract with clients to provide services, and have an incentive to keep their patients/clients healthy. If their patient/client has to be hospitalised the HMO contracts with the 'best buy' hospital for that service.

It sounds very familiar, the more so on reading the working party papers, just out. Of course, there is one difference. In the US, HMO clients pay an annual sum, either individually or through insurance, for their health maintenance and care. Is Chris Ham so sure we are not going down this road? ●

Katy Gardiner, Liverpool

Private Set-up

Chris Ham's article (MT March) is naive. There are no privatisation proposals in the NHS white paper because the organisational systems necessary to administer private medicine do not exist. The establishment of independent hospitals and GP practices

negotiating payment for services will establish such systems. In the next two to three years the necessary management and financial, and hence charging, systems are being implemented. After the next election health care can be privatised. ●

Judy Cox, Gwent

Pact Problems

Even if Davis and Green (MT February) are right that Labour cannot win an overall majority next time, a Labour-Democrat pact will not improve the chances of defeating Thatcher.

In the abstract, a pact giving the Democrats a clear run in the South against Tories might give the Democrats 20-30 extra seats, although I see no way it could benefit Labour elsewhere since Democrat voters will, other things being equal, split evenly between Labour and Tory candidates if Democrat candidates stand aside. But elections are not fought in a psephological vacuum. The conclusion of a Labour-Democrat pact is likely to have a number of nasty political consequences.

First, Tory propaganda that votes for Democrats equal votes for Labour will be confirmed and will persuade many right-leaning Democrat voters to vote Tory.

Second, it is fanciful to imagine that Constituency Labour Parties will be eager to stand aside, often for much-hated Democrats. Many local Labour Parties would have to be shut down. Such internecine strife would present a disastrous political spectacle. We would probably end up with many independent Labour candidates as well.

Third, as Davis and Green

acknowledge, it is unlikely that the SDP could cohabit the same pact with Labour. SDP candidates would split the anti-Thatcher vote with renewed vigour, especially as they would be handed a new identity as the centre party untainted by deals with Labour.

The combined effect of these factors will be to impede any battle to unseat the Conservatives. The sort of 'let's all get together and things will be fine' thinking behind the Davis and Green analysis is all too reminiscent of the botched Liberal-SDP merger that was really a split. Labour has enough splits already without being given the kiss of death by Paddy Ashdown.

Davis and Green say that a majority Labour win cannot happen. But politics is a strange business that has often confounded over-speculative analysts of voting behaviour. Unforeseen storms often blow finely-balanced theories to the ground like playing card houses. Theories may say how Thatcherism is in the ascendant, but political instincts tell me that after poll-tax blues and a possible economic downturn Thatcherite ideology will not look so convincing.

I'm working for a Labour victory, and no pacts. ●

Dave Toke, Birmingham

Electoral Suicide

Much as I found the article on electoral pacts (*MT* Feb) interesting, there was nothing particularly new or revolutionary suggested. In the 'accepted' pacts of standing down at key seats, the only result I can see is electoral suicide and the continuation of Thatcherism.

There is, though, another pact: for constitutional reform. The pact which I suggest for the opposition would involve no political agreements, only the call for the immediate dissolution of parliament after victory, with a following general election under proportional representation.

What has the opposition to lose from this 'pact for democracy'? There is virtually no way that such a pact could fail to win, as the following elections would

decide who was to rule. It would unite all except the few Tories scared of not being re-elected under PR. Without PR it will be a long time before we see the back of Thatcher. We must not let her further undermine civil liberties and destroy what remains of socialism.

If the opposition won with such a pact there is no way a minority government like Thatcher's could have such reactionary policies. Even if the electorate voted as in 1987 in the first PR election, the most radical Thatcher proposals would easily be defeated. With the wave of optimism and the desire for further change which would be created. I would be quietly confident that a socialist government would be elected at long last.●

C Saunders, Southport

Epistemological Anarchy

Contrary to Andrew Coates (Letters, *MT* Feb), I am not so dismissive of the debates about postmodernism. It is not only an affair between tiny numbers of French intellectuals; witness the British work being done by Laclau and Mouffe, Gavin Kitching, Barry Hindess etc, and the American contributions of Michael Ryan, Stanley Aronowitz and Gayatri Spivak.

Anybody who takes Roy Bhaskar seriously is deserving of pity: his book *Scientific Realism And Human Emancipation* might as well have been written in Hegel's day. What it calls 'science' is nothing more or less than a metaphysical attempt to shore-up a very Western and rationalist concept of science which is a cultural inheritance from ancient Greece.

Coates' criticisms of Kuhn

and Feyerabend are easily dealt with. Coates accuses them of being 'arbitrary': well, the answer to this is a proud 'Guilty!' It is only by recognising that our point of departure is one point among many that we can come to a completely anti-essentialist understanding of the world.

This is what poststructuralism means when it states that all metaphysical ideologies (orthodox marxism included) 'forget' the articulation of differences at the point of departure and convert them into an all-encompassing origin, which bears the seed of all future development. This is why we should support Feyerabend's 'epistemological anarchy' as the latest phase in the project of extracting basically bourgeois forms from the body of left-wing thought.●

Brian Precious, Lancashire

Raymond Williams

The widely-lamented death last year of Raymond Williams has meant the loss of Britain's foremost contemporary socialist thinker. A trust is being set up, with the status of a legal charity, in order to fund a series of annual memorial lectures. These lectures would discuss and develop the continuing relevance of Williams' extraordinarily wide-ranging work to future cultural and political practice. They would be delivered in central London and the texts would be published.

We hope that many readers of *Marxism Today* will sympathise

with this plan and contribute generously to its realisation. Cheques should be made out to 'Raymond Williams Memorial Trust' and sent to me at the Department of Literature, Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA.●

Graham Martin, Milton Keynes

Editorial Note: We welcome your letters to add to discussion. Please send them to *MT* Letters Page, 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY. Brevity means you are more likely to be published. We reserve the right to cut.●

Serious Science

Is it really necessary for *MT* to demonstrate its editors' defensive ignorance of matters scientific by indexing a perfectly reasonable news item under the head 'Science Gets Sexy' (Contents *MT* March)? Those seriously concerned with issues such as the use and abuse of scientific and technological discovery, and the irresponsible political control of science, despair at such trivialisation. The heading is not even remotely related to the content. Good tabloid stuff.

The item itself gets it about right, in noting that industrialists' new-found motivation to 'promote careers in science, even for women' is 'the spectre of a severe shortage of trained technical staff by the end of the next decade'. Good technical staff are always in short supply, and what better for industry's needs than a docile band of careful and responsible women service workers? Hence government enthusiasm for schemes such as the EOC's WISE (Women Into Science & Engineering) campaign.

When it comes to the 'decision-taking professional-level' jobs and research posts in science and engineering, where competition for places in the sun gets fiercer daily, the picture is rather different. We have now to

have our token senior women. That is inevitable at the current state of the tide. However, there is abundant historical evidence for the elimination of women in science from their positions in times of recession or cutback in public funding for research. The present situation is no different. At the same time it is apparent that, as in the past, women workers are often to be found in the newest fields. Women are quicker, it seems, to recognise potential openings and less constrained by loss of an established position.

You report the Festival's concern with promoting 'scientific literacy' and 'public understanding of science'. A real presence of women in the scientific workforce can only further discussion in the community at large of the promise or problems associated with new developments in science, a Festival objective.

It is important that the Festival does not in future years, as you envisage, degenerate into a mere technocratic event or PR exercise, trade-financed and sales-motivated. There are quite enough of these already. To ensure that this does not happen, Edinburgh's Science Festival in April should get the serious coverage that it merits.●

Sam Stone, Edinburgh



Apology: Last month (*MT* March) we managed to print a photograph on page eight which was not Ricardo Lagos, the prominent Chilean socialist leader.

We apologise for the mix-up, and print here the photograph which should have accompanied Benny Pollack's interview.●



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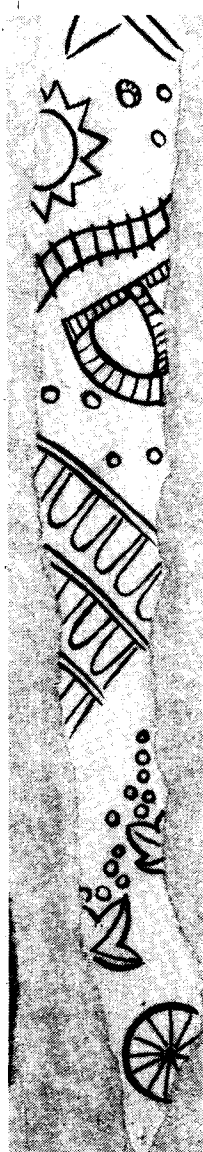
1992 will further weaken national sovereignty within the European Community. It remorselessly points in the direction of political union. **David Marquand** argues the case for a federal Europe

Slowly, belatedly and rather grudgingly, British political and economic leaders are beginning to realise that something rather important is happening in the European Community, and that the 'something' is connected with 1992. So far, however, few have grasped the full significance of the 1992 project, which has provided the central theme of Community politics since the mid-80s. Until last summer, the government saw it as an exercise in trade liberalisation and little more. Since Mrs Thatcher's *démarche* at Bruges, some of the wider political implications have entered its calculations as well. But the real nature of the exercise still eludes it. In particular, ministers still seem to think that they can pull out what are, for them, the plums of trade liberalisation and deregulation without sacrificing any of the powers and prerogatives traditionally associated with the sovereign nation-state. They do not realise that the transfer of sovereignty which the Bruges speech was designed to prevent lies at the heart of the whole programme.

The fact is that the 1992 project is a response to a complex set of pressures which have called the traditional concept of national sovereignty into question. The first is the growth of international economic interdependence, which has made it increasingly difficult for the medium-sized nation-state (and

perhaps even for the super-state) to make its will prevail in the economic sphere. Four developments have played crucial parts in this process. Thanks to the extraordinary growth in international trade which has been one of the most marked features of postwar economic history, all developed countries live by taking in each other's washing. This means that the levels of output and employment in country A depend on the level of demand not only in country A itself, but also in countries B, C and D, to whom it sells its exports; and that, by the same token, *their* levels of output and employment depend in large part on the level of demand in country A.

Associated with the growth of international trade, moreover, has been a marked growth in the role of multinational companies, owing allegiance to no national state and, in many cases, disposing of resources so great that they are almost immune to the sticks and carrots of national policy. The third development is the growth of an increasingly-globalised capital market and the deregulation of many national capital markets. Last, but not least, come the effects of accelerating technological change, and the growing ease of technology transfer. The net effect of these changes is to make it more difficult for medium-sized Western nation-states, with open-market economies, to operate economic policies significantly out of line with those of the rest of the



'The globalisation of economic forces requires a corresponding globalisation of political institutions'



developed world.

The Keynesian revolution of the 1940s was designed to make the nation-state master in its own economic house: to give national governments a battery of regulatory mechanisms which would enable them to maintain full employment in the face of recessionary forces of the sort that baffled the governments of the 1920s and 1930s. In medium-sized nation-states, at any rate, the changes just mentioned have undone the Keynesian revolution. Keynes' fundamental insight that the level of employment depended upon the level of demand may still be true in principle, but it is no longer possible for a medium-sized nation-state to put that insight to work in the real world, unless it can persuade other medium-sized nation-states to do the same.

If it cannot, if it seeks unilaterally to reflate its own economy so as to raise the level of demand and employment within its own frontiers despite continuing recession outside them, it is likely to achieve only higher levels of inflation, a depreciating currency and a deteriorating trade balance. Sooner or later (and in most cases sooner rather than later) these will force it to bring the whole experiment to a halt, probably before a significant improvement in output and employment has taken place. This, of course, was the experience of the Labour government in Britain between 1974 and 1976; and also



of the French Socialist government after its victory in 1981. In both these cases, governments committed to high levels of employment, and anxious to use the traditional instruments of Keynesian demand management in order to maintain full employment, were overwhelmed by a worldwide bias towards deflation, reflecting the determination of the 'stronger' economies to give higher priority to the conquest of inflation than to growth or full employment.

These developments have posed hard questions. If the nation-state is no longer master in its own economic house, what has become of national sovereignty? If democratically-elected governments are no longer sovereign in the economic sphere, how can economic forces be subjected to democratic political control? Is there still any role for public power at all? Or is the currently-fashionable neo-liberalism correct in thinking that resources will have to be allocated through the market alone? If there is still a role for public power, how is that role to be played? Plainly, it can no longer be played at the level of the nation-state. Can it be played at a supranational or international level instead? If so, how? In principle, the answer is straightforward enough. The globalisation of economic forces requires a corresponding globalisation of political institutions to cope with them: since the nation-state can no longer exercise sovereignty in many crucial economic spheres, it will have to share some of its power with supranational bodies. In practice, however, the road to such a destination is full of pitfalls. The central question confronting the democratic nation-states of Western Europe is how to cope with them.

Defence considerations point in the same direction. As a juridical concept, sovereignty has nothing to do with war-waging capacity, but even so the emergence of the sovereign nation-state on to the stage of history was closely related to the growth of war-making capacity — notably to the invention of gunpowder and to answering advances in the science of fortification. By and large, states which successfully established their claim to statehood, and thereby to sovereignty, did so, in part, through their ability to wage war more successfully than other would-be states.

In this perspective, the second world war marks as profound a break in European history as did the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire's claims to suzerainty over the rest of Christendom in the early modern period. For the first time, none of the sovereign states of Europe has possessed genuinely independent war-waging capacity. Vis-à-vis the super powers, all of them have been in a position of clienthood, reminiscent of Belgium's position vis-à-vis the United Kingdom in the 19th century. Hence, of course, the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty and the Warsaw Pact in the immediate postwar period; and hence the effective hegemony of

the two superpowers over the alliances formed around themselves at that time — hegemonies underlined in a peculiarly painful way in the crisis year of 1956, when Soviet tanks crushed the Hungarian uprising, and American pressure brought the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt to a halt.

Latterly, however, new trends have called into question the hegemonic relationships which have characterised the two power blocs for most of the postwar period. The United States and the Soviet Union have both begun to suffer the effects of what the historian, Paul Kennedy, has called 'imperial overstretch'. In each case, the economic costs of maintaining superpower status have begun to cut into the industrial base, upon which that status ultimately rests. In each case the effects of overstretch have been magnified by the escalating costs of defence associated with the ever more sophisticated weaponry spawned by the arms race — itself a concomitant of superpower rivalry and hegemony. The result is a paradox. In absolute terms each of the superpowers possesses unimaginable military power. Each can destroy the world several times over; the armouries of each tower above those of their allies. Yet, in the economic sphere, each has suffered acute relative decline vis-à-vis those allies; and each is groping for ways to minimise, to share, or in some way to disembarass itself of the burdens of superpower status.

That, in turn, has obvious implications for the defence of Western Europe. Since the end of the second world war the nation-states of Western Europe have responded to their loss of independent war-waging capacity by alliance with and dependence upon a hegemonic United States. If, as seems increasingly probable, we are now coming to the end of the period of American hegemony, they will have to find some other response. Instead of relying on the United States, they will have to rely on each other. It is hard to see how they can do this without much more surrender of formal sovereignty in the defence field than they have been prepared to make so far.

The evolution of the European Community must be seen against this background. Though it was concerned with economics, the aims of its founding fathers were political. They hoped to transcend national sovereignty within a supranational union; and they assumed that if national economies were knitted together a supranational union would develop of its own accord. Economic integration would lead sooner or later to political integration: by solving the practical problems of 'low politics' in the mundane areas affected by the creation of a customs union, the process of integration would gradually 'spill over' into the glamorous areas of foreign, defence and monetary policy, which were the stuff of 'high politics'. Little by

little, an irresistible momentum would be set up, which would sweep away the obstacles to full-scale political union. The Commission would evolve into the executive of this union. The Council of Ministers would become the 'upper house' of its legislature, and the directly-elected European Parliament the 'lower house'.

As everyone knows, events belied these expectations. In the areas of low politics with which it was concerned, the EEC was triumphantly successful. Partly because of this, its attractive power for states on its periphery — revealed in the enlargements which have increased its membership from the original six to 12 has been formidable. Yet, success in low politics did not spill over into high politics. In the 1960s, France and West Germany — the two major powers of the original six — differed sharply over foreign and defence policy. Though these differences became less acute in the 1970s, Italy and (after her accession to the Community in 1973) the United Kingdom followed sharply different monetary and macro-economic policies from those of West Germany, with shattering results for the relative exchange rates of the major Community currencies.

Meanwhile, the institutional development of the Community had been stultified by the so-called Luxembourg compromise, which President de Gaulle forced on his partners in 1966, and which had the effect of perpetuating national vetoes even in areas which, under the Treaty, should have been covered by majority voting. Worse still, it was beginning to look as though the divergences in economic performance which were both cause and consequence of the differences in economic policy might jeopardise the *acquis communautaire* in the areas of low politics where integration had been comparatively successful in the past. The old notion that the route to high politics lay through low politics had, in short, turned out to be misconceived. If the member states of the Community wished to tackle high politics at all, they would have to tackle them directly. At the same time the collapse of American hegemony, and also the US dollar, together with the strains which these developments set up within the Western world, forced issues of the highest high politics on to the European agenda.

The response of the member states of the Community was illuminating. Attempts were made to strengthen the 'supranational' elements in the Community's institutional structure. The European Parliament was given certain powers over the Community budget, and after a delay of more than 20 years the treaty commitment to its direct election by the people of the Community was finally honoured. But these developments, however encouraging they might be to those who hoped for an eventual political union, had only a limited impact on Community decision-

'What is underway with 1992 is a massive exercise in national de-regulation and Community re-regulation'



What's What In The European Community

The European Community (EC) binds together its 12 member states through a complex set of central bodies:

Council of Ministers The key decision-making body for all EC policy. Comprises government ministers from all member states, the exact representatives changing with the subject under discussion. Every six months, the presidency of the Council rotates among the member states: currently Spain, next France. Based in Brussels.

European Council The twice-yearly summit meeting of all 12 heads of state or government, assisted by their foreign ministers, plus the Commission president. Key political forum for setting parameters of the EC's work, but it has no formal power, and must implement its wishes via the Council of Ministers.

Commission Has 17 members, appointed by member governments, to serve a four-year term. Supported by a large civil service based in Brussels, divided into 20 'directorates-general' (DGs). Commissioners act independently of governments and of the EC Council, and may only be removed en bloc by the Parliament. The Commission has wide executive powers to initiate EC legislation and issue regulations, directives and so on — which it then polices. It also administers the money.

Parliament Also called Assembly. Directly-elected since 1979, for five-year terms. Number of members (MEPs) increased significantly under the Single Act (SEA), to 518. The largest countries, Britain included, have 81 seats each, Luxembourg gets six. Powers are strictly limited, despite a beefing-up under the SEA. Crucially, Parliament lacks powers to originate legislation. Has the exceptional power to demand, by a 2/3 majority, the Commission's resignation. Parliament has limited say in the budget. May reject the budget as a whole, which it did in 1979, 1982 and 1985.

Court of Justice Interprets European treaties and laws, directives, regulations etc. Comprises 13 judges, appointed every six years, by agreement with member states. May overturn national judicial decisions and legislation found to be incompatible with the provisions of EC law.

Economic and Social Committee 189 representatives of mainly trade-union, consumer, farming and professional bodies; a consultative forum. ●

making.

The most significant developments of the 1970s took place outside the institutional structure set up by the treaties. In the first place, the governments of the Community established a systematic process of 'political co-operation' to co-ordinate their foreign policies. Secondly, and more ambitiously, they established the European Monetary System (EMS) to provide a zone of 'currency stability' in the Community by aligning exchange rates more closely together. Thirdly, they created a more or less formalised 'European Council', consisting of the heads of government of the Community, meeting at periodic intervals.

These developments were all pragmatic adaptations to felt needs. They sprang from no vision of the Community's longer-term future, and corresponded to no explicit doctrine. All of them were essentially inter-governmental in character. They depended for their success on the co-operation of sovereign states, each jealously guarding its formal sovereignty in the policy areas concerned. They enabled the member states of the Community partially to offset the disintegrative tendencies which had started to make themselves felt so acutely when the long boom of the 1950s and 1960s began to peter out, and to tackle potentially divisive issues of high politics which the founding fathers failed to touch. But they did nothing to make Community decision-making more transparent or more accountable, or to push the Community further along the road to a political union.

The Community has developed in a way quite unlike that envisaged when it was set up. Its institutional structure contains federalist elements — notably, the Court of Justice, whose role in the evolution of Community law recalls that of the Supreme Court in the early days of the American union. But, despite some developments of a quasi-federalist character, it is not a federation; indeed, by focusing on low politics, while high politics are left to the member states, it has reversed the normal pattern of a federal system. Nor is there any reason to believe that it is bound to evolve into a federation merely by continuing along its present path. The nation-state, not the Community, remains by far the most important focus for the political loyalties of Europeans; Community decisions are taken by a complex process of bargaining and compromise, in which the most important actors are the governments of the sovereign states which make it up.

Yet it is much more than an association of sovereign states co-operating only when they feel inclined — a *Europe des patries* of the sort envisaged by Charles de Gaulle. By virtue of its very existence, the states who compose it are becoming ever more interdependent, and that fact imposes ever more severe constraints upon their freedom on ac-

**'The
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set up'**



tion. Juridically, they are as sovereign as they ever were, but the language of sovereignty is as remote from the realities of the system in which they are enmeshed as is the language of federalism. That system is, moreover, dynamic, not static: a process rather than a structure. And, as it has evolved, the language of sovereignty — whether of the sovereign nation-state or the sovereign national parliament has become less and less apposite to it, while institutions based on the assumption that that language corresponds to economic and political realities have become less and less able to manage it satisfactorily.

This, then, is the background to the 1985 decision of the member governments to complete the so-called 'internal market' by 1992. The logic of the decision deserves some discussion. The Commission white paper setting out the steps needed to make it a reality proposed a programme of formidable scope and complexity. It listed 300 actions necessary to create a genuinely single market covering the whole territory of the Community. These were grouped into three categories — those needed, respectively, to demolish 'physical' barriers to free trade and free movement; to demolish 'technical' barriers; and to demolish 'fiscal' barriers. Despite these complexities, however, the underlying logic was simple enough. In essence, what is at issue is a new version of the founding fathers' original project. The objective plainly belongs to the sphere of high politics; the means have to do with low politics. The aim is to strengthen the Community's competitiveness in world markets, particularly in the area of high technology where European companies seemed to be losing ground to their Japanese and American competitors, so as to prevent a relative decline in the economic and ultimately political power and influence of Western Europe vis-a-vis Japan and the United States. The assumption is that the chief obstacles to greater competitiveness lie in the barriers to genuinely free competition within Europe, and that the way to reach the goal is to remove these barriers. Free competition internally is assumed to be a necessary (and, in some interpretations, perhaps even a sufficient) condition of competitiveness externally.

On one level, there is nothing particularly new in this. After all, the central objective of the Rome Treaty was to establish a common market, with no barriers to the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour. Looked at in that perspective, the Single European Act is merely a belated decision to carry out the Rome Treaty prospectus — a decision made necessary because, in the intervening 30 years, the prospectus was frustrated by the emergence of a host of non-tariff barriers to free competition, of a kind which the founding fathers did not foresee. On another level, however, there is far more to it than this. What is underway is a massive

Creating the basis for an electoral agreement to defeat Thatcherism is now the central issue in British politics. But whilst millions may be looking for a common-sense route to robbing Thatcher of a fourth term, the Parliamentary Opposition posture and point-score. Proposals and counter-proposals fly all around, but meanwhile no one will make the first concrete move towards constructing a pact.

The Communist Party on the other hand is centrally committed to a new politics, founded on creating a democratic alternative to Thatcherism, that projects an electoral pact as central to our analysis and activity. We are not afraid of compromise, nor do we make the mistake of confusing tactics with strategy.

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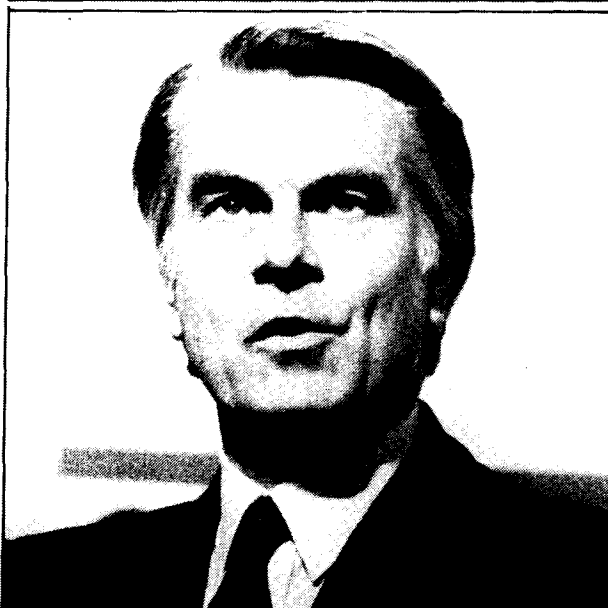
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Europe's Coming Of Age

1950: French foreign affairs minister Robert Schuman proposes the pooling of West European steel and coal production under a single authority.

1951: Treaty of Paris signed by France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg, setting up the European Coal And Steel Community (ECSC). Its purpose: 'to promote improved working conditions and an improved standard of living for the workers in each of the industries for which it is responsible.'

1957: Treaties of Rome signed by the six ECSC countries, setting up the European Economic Community (EEC, but now normally referred to without the 'economic' as the EC), and the European Atomic Energy Authority (Euratom — aimed at co-operation in civil nuclear research and training). Over time Euratom and ECSC become subsumed within the overall EC structure.

Founding EEC aims: to create a common market and in the long-term, political union. Harmonisation of member sta-

tes' economic policies to be achieved by eliminating customs duties and trade restrictions, ensuring free movement within the Community for people, services and capital, and developing common approaches to agriculture and transport. Provision also made for movement towards common living standards for workers, including equal pay for women.

Britain, though part of the preliminary talks, feels constrained by Commonwealth commitments and does not join the EEC.

1961: Britain (under Tory pro-European Harold Macmillan), Denmark and Ireland apply to join the EEC, followed by Norway in 1962. Their applications are vetoed by France's de Gaulle.

1962: Common agricultural policy (CAP) established.

1967: Britain's second try at membership, now under Labour's Harold Wilson. Along with the other three countries, her application is again vetoed by France.

1968: Completion of the customs union within the Community. This removes direct barriers to trade, eg, tariffs or quotas on imports. But it leaves untouched the multitude of other barriers, such as national administrative borders,

technical standards, employee qualifications etc.

1972: Britain, Denmark and Ireland sign treaties of accession making them members of the EC from January 1, 1973. In Norway, a national referendum rejects membership.

1974: The British Labour government is elected on a pledge to renegotiate the country's terms of entry.

1975: British referendum confirms continued EC membership by a 67% vote in favour following renegotiation of terms.

1979: First direct elections to the European Parliament gives a right-wing majority, but the socialists form the single largest group. Only one third of British voters bother to vote.

1980: The British Labour Party conference votes for a policy of withdrawal from the EC.

1981: Greece joins the Community.

1986: Spain and Portugal join the Community.

1987: The Single European Act comes into force, providing for the completion of the internal market by 1992.

1989: The British Labour Party agrees to contest the European elections on the common European socialist manifesto, explicitly assenting to the future development of the EC. ●

exercise in national de-regulation and Community re-regulation. This exercise applies, not just to the movement of goods, services, capital and labour across national boundaries, but to the behaviour of governments, subordinate public authorities and private economic actors within the member states of the Community as well. For, whereas tariffs operate, by definition, at national frontiers, the non-tariff barriers, which it is the object of the internal-market programme to eliminate, operate behind frontiers and within the national economies bounded by those frontiers. Public procurement, merger policy, company law, health and safety at work, tax rates — all these will be intimately affected, and in respect of national as well as cross-national transactions.

This must entail a substantial further transfer of competence and power from national to Community authorities. The object of the exercise is to liberalise markets and demolish barriers to competition. But past experience shows that a free market cannot be created, once and for all, by a single act of will. As Adam Smith knew well, markets do not remain competitive if they are left to their own devices. If they are to stay free, someone has to ensure that market actors do not protect themselves from the pains of freedom by resorting to new protectionist devices of one sort or another. A

Community-wide free market therefore implies a Community-wide political authority to police it. In practice, this will have to be done partly by the Commission and partly by the Court of Justice both supranational rather than intergovernmental institutions. Even on fairly conservative assumptions about the scope of the 1992 programme, in other words, further economic integration necessarily implies substantial further political and legal integration.

That is only the beginning of the story. If the barriers which have so far impeded free trade and free movement are to come down and stay down, governments must lose much of the freedom of action they now enjoy. If fiscal frontiers are to be abolished, VAT rates will have to be brought much closer together — either as the Commission has proposed, by deliberate decision, or, as the British government prefers, by the pressure of market forces. In either case, governments will have less freedom of manoeuvre in the fiscal field than they have had hitherto. The abolition of physical barriers impinges on matters like immigration and counter-terrorism policy, which are currently outside the Community framework. The abolition of technical barriers — particularly, perhaps, in the highly-protected markets for services — will deprive member governments of important regulatory powers, and make necessary the establishment of Com-

munity regulations instead of national ones. Opening up public procurement to free competition will weaken the ability of national public authorities to influence the economy.

The longer-term implications go still wider. Economic changes as far-reaching as those foreshadowed by the internal-market programme are bound to have profound distributional consequences. There will be gainers, but there will also be losers. Who will allocate the gains and losses? In a pure market order (not that a pure market order has ever existed in the real world) gains and losses are allocated by the market. In the welfare states of Western Europe, however, it is accepted that public power should intervene to alter market outcomes. So far, this process of redistribution has been left, by and large, to the member states; the Community as such has had little to do with it. By a curious paradox, however, the Thatcher government's long campaign against Britain's 'unfair' budgetary contribution forced distributional issues on to the Community agenda; and the 1992 programme has done the same. The decision taken at the 1987 Brussels summit to double the structural funds dedicated to the Community's weaker regions is a sign that the Community has now accepted at least a partial responsibility for the distributional consequences of its economic policies. Precedents of that sort tend, sooner or later, to be followed. And, if national redistribution is supplemented by Community redistribution, that too will extend the scope of Community decision-making.

Much the same is true of industrial policy, monetary policy and even macro-economic policy and certain aspects of labour-market policy. Few now advocate the kind of industrial policy which France followed, with some success, in the 1950s and 1960s, and which Britain tried, much less successfully, to emulate in the 1960s and 1970s. But it does not follow that there is no need for an industrial policy of any kind. Still less does it follow that it should sit back and allow predatory competitors from outside the Community to take advantage of the market liberalisation implied by the 1992 programme to kill off Community producers. Yet the 1992 programme will demolish many of the instruments through which member states have implemented industrial policies in the past, and will make national industrial policies virtually impossible. Increasingly, the choice will lie between no policy and a Community policy. Here too the logic points unmistakably to more action on the Community level — and therefore to Community institutions capable of taking action.

The position on monetary policy has been put best in a contribution by Professor Krugman to the influential Padoa-Schioppa report: 'As a simple

'Federalism does not mean centralisation'





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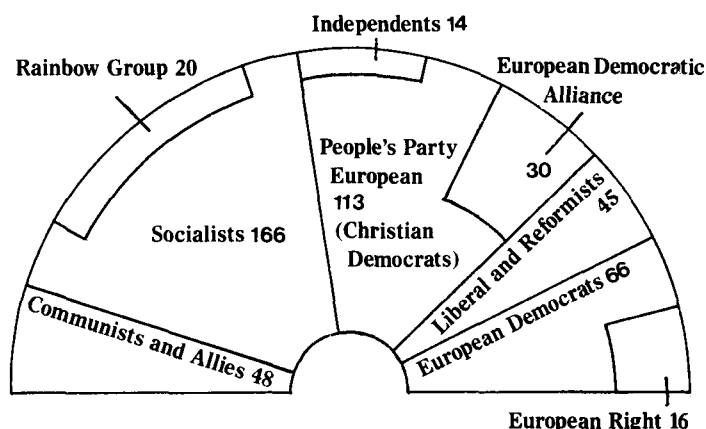


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Europe's Political Spectrum

The European Parliament meets for one week each month (except August) in full session at Strasbourg, and additionally operates 18 standing committees. Euro MPs (MEPs) form groups along political, not national, lines, shown in left-to-right order in the diagram. Not all the European political categories are familiar. The 81 UK MEPs divide up like this: 33 Socialists (Labour Party and one SDLP, Northern Ireland); 45 European Democrats (Conservative Party); one Northern Ireland MEP in each of the European Right (OUP) and Independent (DUP), and one Scottish Nationalist in the European Democratic Alliance. ●

Political Groups In The European Parliament



matter of feasibility, Europe cannot have at the same time (i) stable exchange rates, (ii) integrated capital markets and (iii) independent monetary policies. The experience of the post-1973 period seems to indicate that (i) is not something that can be dispensed with. Given the already-close integration of European markets for goods and services, large exchange-rate fluctuations associated with divergent monetary policies seem to be unacceptable. Thus, creation of a unified capital market will also require adoption of a common monetary policy.'

The need for exchange-rate stability is now accepted; and it will become greater, not smaller, as and when the 1992 programme becomes a reality. An important part of the point of the programme, moreover, is precisely to eliminate controls on capital movements, and thereby to create the 'unified capital market' of which Professor Krugman spoke.

The conclusion he drew is inescapable. If national authorities follow divergent monetary policies once the capital market has been unified, exchange rates will not remain stable. If they do not, much of the point of the 1992 programme will have been lost. This does not mean, of course, that there has to be a single monetary authority, explicitly designated as such. Nominally-independent national authorities could all tacitly agree to follow the monetary policy laid down by the Bundesbank. This is approximately what has happened in the EMS up to now. That, however, makes the Bundesbank the arbiter of the entire Community's monetary fate; and, to put it at its lowest, it is not clear that the other member states will be happy to allow it to play that role for ever. The only alternative is a Community monetary

authority of some kind.

On macro-economic policy, the position is less straightforward. Macro-economic policy is, and will remain, a matter for the member states — another crucial difference between the Community and a federal system. Yet it is worth remembering that the Rome Treaty provided for the co-ordination of macro-economic policies. So far that provision has hardly bitten in the real world, but here too the 1992 programme creates new constraints on the ability of member governments to follow policies of their own choosing. Given a common monetary policy, much less divergent VAT rates and the need to keep rates of direct taxation fairly close together if the free movement of labour is not to produce damaging 'brain drains' from high to low-tax countries, there will be little scope for variety in macro-economic policies in any case. Quite apart from that, the Commission's calculations suggest that if the Community is to realise all the potential gains from the extra micro-economic efficiency which the 1992 programme is designed to generate, macro-economic policies will have to change — a change which, in practice, would have to be co-ordinated. And even co-ordination requires co-ordinating institutions.

On labour-market policy — in some respects, the most controversial area of all — the issues at stake have to do with Community regulation, not national co-ordination. Other things being equal, the market liberalisation implied by the 1992 programme may give a competitive advantage to countries with weak trade unions, poor standards of health and safety, scanty protection against unfair hiring and firing practices and poor or non-existent provisions for worker consultation. How, then, to prevent a kind of 'social dumping': a race for the bottom? The only possible

'How, then, to prevent a kind of "social dumping": a race for the bottom?'



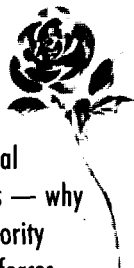
answer is that the Community will have to step in; that Community-wide market liberalisation will have to be accompanied by Community-wide politics to protect labour from these dangers. That answer is vigorously contested by the present British government, but it has strong support from the Commission, and also from a number of member states. It is too soon to say how the question will be decided. To put it at its lowest, the decisions are bound to impose further constraints on national decision-making and make the language of national sovereignty even less applicable to Community affairs.

All this raises profound questions of political principle. The 1992 programme is almost certainly irreversible. It has captured the imagination of the Community's private sector; and most of the member governments are solidly behind it. Some of it may not become a reality by the due date — though it is worth noting that most qualified observers have been surprised by the speed with which progress has been made. Some of it may never become a reality. But there is little doubt that the great bulk of the programme will be in place quite early in the next decade.

The language of national sovereignty will have even less to do with the real world in which the Community's citizens live and work, and in which its governments seek to promote the interests of those citizens, than it does already. In some fields, those governments will be nominally free to act as they wish, but in practice more tightly constrained than they were before. In many, they will have lost even their nominal freedom. Supranational Community institutions will have acquired formidable new powers of control, supervision and intervention. The Community will not have become a federal state, but its member states will be far more tightly enmeshed with each other and with the Community than they have been hitherto.

The trouble is that the processes of Community decision-making are so opaque, so hard to scrutinise, so difficult to understand and so technocratic in character that it is extraordinary difficult to hold the decision-makers to account. The Commission, which plays a critical role in Community politics as policy initiator, manager and honest broker, is elected by nobody. In law, it is responsible to the European Parliament, but in political reality, the relationship between Parliament and Commission is not that of controller to controlled. They are allies, supporting each other against the over-mighty Council of Ministers; and of the two, Parliament is the weaker. The national ministers who make up the Council are, of course, responsible to their national parliaments. But national parliaments find it hard to hold them to account for their actions in the Council, or even to discover what those actions are. Com-

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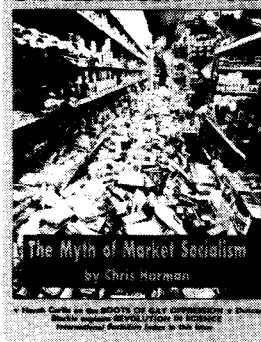
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INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM 42



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Community Europe consists, in practice, of a web of interlocking technocracies — of Commission officials, negotiating and arguing with each other; of the officials of organised interest groups negotiating and arguing both with national and with Commission officials. Into that web, parliaments hardly break.

To be sure, the Single European Act has changed the balance of Community decision-making. The Council will decide most of the policies needed to complete the internal market by majority vote, while the so-called 'co-operation procedure' has given the European Parliament a bigger role than it has had hitherto. In the policy areas covered by the Single European Act, it has acquired some legislative leverage. It is, at last, a player in the legislative game rather than a spectator. It can at least be argued that it has moved part of the way towards co-decision with the Council at some time in the future.

But whatever may be true of the future, it would be wrong to exaggerate the significance of these provision here and now. If the 1992 policy works, power, and therefore, responsibility, will be diffused much more widely than before. Member governments will lose important regulatory powers, and firms will become increasingly cross-national in structure. It will no longer be possible to make crucial strategic choices, essentially social in character — for example, the appropriate trade-off between growth and environmental protection or between productivity and employment — on the national level, since the relevant national institutions will not be able to make their wishes effective. Who will make them instead? One possible answer, of course, is that such choices do not have to be made consciously at all: that it is best to allow them to emerge from the interplay of individual choices in a competitive market. That answer, it hardly needs to be said, would be bitterly contested. It is consistent with the reborn classical economic liberalism which has figured so largely in the politics of the Atlantic world in the last decade or so, but it is alien to other political traditions; and it would not be accepted by the social forces which adhere to those traditions. But if that answer is rejected, what other answers are on offer? The truth is that at present, there is a hole at the heart of the internal market programme; and, welcome though they may be, the new powers given to Parliament have not filled it up.

Is there a way forward? If so, what is it? The key to accountability is transparency. Decision-makers can be held to account only if their identity is known. Community decision-making is insufficiently accountable because it is not transparent: because its processes are hidden from view in a fog of overlapping jurisdictions. The first essential, then, is to clear the fog; and in order to do that, it is necessary to understand

how and why it descended in the first place. Contrary to the received wisdom of much of the British political class, it is not the product of power-hungry Eurocrats, unnecessarily extending the frontiers of their Brussels empires. The chief reason why Community jurisdictions overlap is that the member states (and, in particular, the administrations of the member states) have been unwilling to accept the full implications of the interdependence which Community membership has brought with it: that they have insisted on clinging to the habits and assumptions of national sovereignty, while building a system in which those habits and assumptions are out of place. They have walked backwards into successive measures of integration-transferring functions from the national to the Community level, but refusing to transfer authority to match.

The result is that committees of national officials proliferate in the Community system like the tentacles of an octopus, hanging on to every protuberance it comes across. If the Community is to develop transparent and accountable decision-making processes, it must overcome the octopoid tendencies of its national bureaucracies.

The only way to do that is to establish clear lines of demarcation between Community institutions and national institutions, to separate the functions and powers best exercised and held on the Community level from those best exercised and held on the national level. That, of course, is another way of saying that the member states of the Community should move from intergovernmentalism to something much more reminiscent of federalism, or at least pre-federalism.

In Britain, such suggestions are apt to seem both impractical and dangerous — impractical, because they run against the grain of British tradition of gradual evolution; dangerous, because they would lead to excessive centralisation. The first objection draws false conclusions from true premises. The British tradition is indeed one of gradual evolution; and, as we have seen, the Community is most unlikely to evolve gradually into a federation without a decisive act of political will. But it does not follow that a federalist approach should be ruled out. Britain's are not the only traditions in the Community and it is not self-evident that they are the best. Gradual evolution has left this country with fewer safeguards against the abuse of power than any other in Western Europe.

It would be absurd to suggest that the Community should leap from intergovernmentalism into federalism in one bound. But if its member states so wished, they could perfectly well agree to adopt a federalist or pre-federalist model at some stage in the future, and decide to move towards it over a specified period.

'The member states of the Community should move to something much more reminiscent of federalism'



The second objection rests on a false premise. Federalism does not mean centralisation, any more than intergovernmentalism means decentralisation. It is merely a technique for separating powers. A Community decision to reconstruct its institutions on federal or pre-federal lines would not entail giving them the kinds of powers available to the federal governments of the United States, West Germany or the federations of the British Commonwealth. Indeed, it can be argued that because the member states have eschewed first principles, clung to intergovernmentalism and left the Community to evolve higgledy-piggledy in response to the pressures of the moment, it is, at present, *more* centralised than it needs to be. To take one obvious example, it is far from self-evident that a federal or pre-federal Community would need a common agricultural policy. In a well-designed federal Community, functions would be allocated to the lowest possible level of government compatible with the efficient discharge of the function in question.

There is no doubt that that would give important functions to the centre. But most of them would be standard-setting functions. Implementation would be left to the members states. Indeed, on the principle that decisions should be taken on the lowest possible level, implementation might often be left to regional or local authorities; and, if that principle were accepted, the upward transfer of functions from the national to the Community level might well be matched by a downward transfer to the regions.

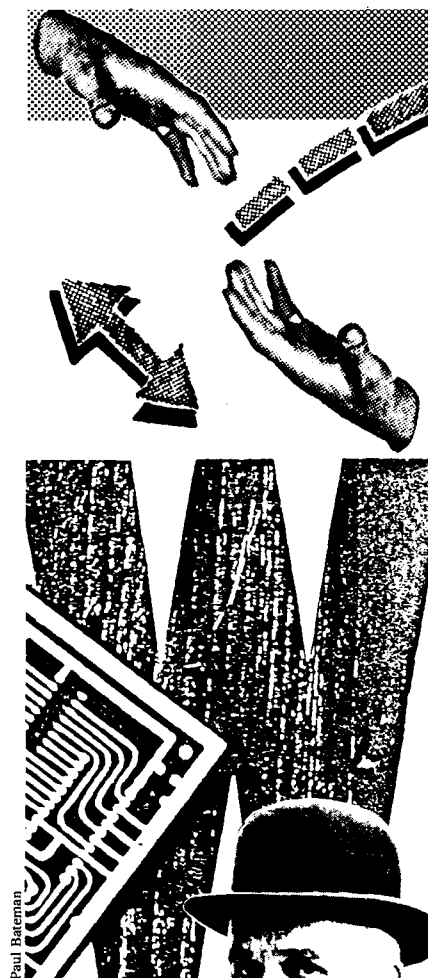
Only in a comparatively small number of areas would Community institutions themselves have to implement the decisions taken at Community level. The decisions in question, we must remember, will be taken at Community level in any event. That is the logic of the Single European Act. What is needed is a system should be more centralised than the cumbersome network of technocracies we know today. It would, however, be more open and more democratic. The Council of Ministers would have to conduct its law-making activities in public. The European Parliament would have to enjoy full powers of co-decision with it. The Commission would have to be made accountable to the people in whose name it acts, either through the direct election of its president or by making it fully responsible to Parliament.

It is easy to see that the technocrats, both European and national, who currently dominate the Community system might oppose a programme of this sort. That is not a reason for the Left to agree with them. For more than a century its central purpose has been to make democratic politics the master, rather than the servant, of market forces. That purpose can no longer be achieved on the national level only by democratising the Community. ●

Future Of Europe Bloc Busters

Europe has two halves. While 1992 is transforming the West, Gorbachev is revolutionising prospects for the East.

Neal Ascherson discusses the future relationship of the two halves after the cold war, and doesn't like what he sees



In the January issue of *Marxism Today*, I asked a question and passed a comment. The question was about the external dimension of *perestroika*. Did the internal changes in Soviet society imply a similar transformation of the relationship between the USSR and the states of the Warsaw Pact? Nobody in Soviet authority had yet made the crucial distinction between the 'legitimate' security interests of the Soviet Union and the internal political structures of the Pact members. And yet there was a growing hope, a strengthening confidence, that these societies could in fact not only reform but qualitatively alter their political and economic regimes without fearing Soviet military intervention.

The comment was about the changing

nature of opposition in Eastern Europe. I suggested that the old 'dissident' generation – intellectual, internationalist, urban-rooted, sited politically somewhere between social democracy and christian democracy – might now be waning. In the new, far more open conditions obtaining above all in Hungary and Poland, with plans for pluralism of political parties and, more vaguely, for free elections which might eventually remove a ruling Communist Party from government, 'dissident' politics were being challenged by a different force. This force is traditional nationalism, whose prejudices are rural and populist and whose ideology may turn out to have more to do with authority than with human rights. A revival of a certain past – that of the old peasant parties at its best, and of *Blut und Boden* nationalism at its worst – seemed to me to be possible.

The unfreezing of the cold war is proceeding at bewildering speed, and highly unevenly. Much has happened since that article was written. The Vienna Review Meeting, in the 35-nation European Security process, finished in January with a closing document committing the signatories to an elaborate list of promises of good behaviour, internationally and internally, and also to accepting the right of other signatories to intervene and protest if one of the 35 failed to carry out the Vienna provisions. Shevardnadze and Gorbachev announced further sweeping arms reduction in Europe, and published the first official figures of force levels.

My question received some reply when Oleg Bogomolov, the senior Soviet expert on Eastern Europe, observed that a neutral and bourgeois Hungary on the Austrian or Swedish model would 'present no problem' to the Soviet Union. Shortly before that incredible remark, Eduard Shevardnadze had urged a mainly Western audience at Vienna to tear down what remained of the old iron curtain (although he later evaded the suggestion that he wanted the Berlin wall demolished). Meanwhile, construction of a new plural politics is going rapidly ahead in Poland and Hungary. Roundtable talks have begun in earnest between the Polish authorities and Solidarity, to the accompaniment of unofficial strikes and street turbulence; a Polish dignitary visiting London was heard to say that it was up to Solidarity to choose whether to remain a trade union or to become a political party (this at a moment when Solidarity was still officially banned). In Hungary, the prime minister discussed openly the possibility of the defeat of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in free multi-party elections.

On the 'populism' front, fierce nationalist confrontation developed again in Kosovo, while in Poland the right-wing KPN (Conference for an Independent Poland) emerged once more on the streets of Krakow during student riots. One result of the Warsaw roundtable talks, incidentally, was to open the way to a re-legalisation of Rural Solidarity, the peasant trade union suppressed in December 1981. Many events in the short

life of Rural Solidarity in 1981 had suggested that it was rapidly becoming a resurrection of the PSL, the huge and radical prewar peasant party. If this project goes through, peasant nationalism will have returned to the political scene of Eastern Europe. And the PSL (if it does emerge from the Rural Solidarity chrysalis) may soon be joined by a revived Agrarian Party in Hungary, at present using the 'Peter Veres Society' as a founding committee.

Beyond these hectic changes and births, the whole continent is altering. If Soviet control is reduced to something like a 'normal' relationship between a superpower and its independent neighbours, if the economic and political reforms keep up their momentum and begin to affect Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), if the arms and conventional forces reductions are accelerated still faster by the new talks in the Helsinki process which have just started in Vienna, then we are entering a new Europe. All we know about it is that our children will use the word 'Europe' in senses, with associations, which we of the cold war generations can't yet imagine.

So much for the *Zukunftsmusik* – the purple passage about the lovely future! There are threatening uncertainties here as well as beautiful ones. Two in particular, both of which hint that this 'new' Europe might simultaneously turn out to be an old Europe – one which its peoples, and the socialist movements in particular, fought for a hundred years to overthrow and to replace. The landscape after the cold war could offer a place to old-fashioned armed conflicts over territory and minorities. It could also divide Europe in a different way, restoring the gulf between the industrialised West and the backward, rural, colonially-exploited East and South-East which yawned before 1914, and was not closed between the two world wars.

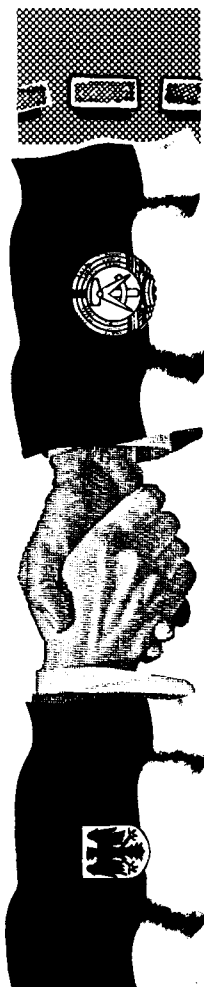
It is 14 years since the 'Helsinki Final Act' was signed. It wasn't really final: ever since, the 35 nations of the European Security and Co-operation Conference have continued to extend and to elaborate the Helsinki principles of 1975. But the Final Act did lay down the architects' blueprint for a Europe living at peace, operating a collective security system, applying minima of civil rights internally and exchanging goods, information and travellers of every kind without impediment.

But, counting the years of preparatory meetings before 1975, the Helsinki design is now 16 or 17 years old. When it was dreamed up in the late 1950s, in the fertile brain of Adam Rapacki, the Polish foreign minister, the Security Conference idea was a way out of the Potsdam idea. At Potsdam, the Big Three – or Four, when the French came in – decided the shape of Europe while the lesser nations waited outside to hear their fate or fortune. Rapacki had the vision of a quite different forum, in which every nation, neutral or Pact member, vast or

tiny, would have a single and equal voice. There was much talk of demilitarised or denuclearised zones, and great hopes for direct contact at bilateral level between junior members of the two military alliances. But there was also the underlying assumption that Europe would remain divided into two hegemonies, Soviet and American. The two superpowers would abandon all ambitions to roll back each other's frontier of control; instead, with the consent of the lesser European states, they would recognise the existing frontiers of Europe as inviolable – alterable perhaps by general consent, but not unilaterally or by force. This implied the acceptance of the division of Europe, and of the political prerogatives of Moscow and Washington either side of the line. Certainly, the division was to be rendered

Soviet withdrawal from its East European imperium. It's a process which has only just begun, which has not yet been spelt out, which might halt or go into reverse ... but that is what it looks like.

This would leave two very different Europes looking at one another. The West is closely integrated, for the most part, and will be even more effectively fused after 1992. Its major industries are supranational, its currencies are convertible, and the major territorial disputes between its members have long been settled – with the exception of Northern Ireland. There are few violent struggles for autonomy within Western Europe, apart from the Basque problem; the South Tyrol question is not in eruption currently, and the movements for independence or autonomy in Scotland,



harmless and gradually permeable; there would be troop and force reductions, more travel, warmer relations. But the division had to be first recognised, before it could be overcome.

Seventeen years is a long time. The Helsinki design is now out of date, even before it has been completed. Above all, nobody foresaw Gorbachev – an error for which the Europeans can scarcely be blamed. In 1975, the future looked symmetrical: the intensity of superpower presence in the continent would be wound down slowly on both sides at about the same pace. What is happening now, however, is asymmetrical. One superpower is apparently preparing to abandon its positions, without insisting that the rival do the same. The cold war is ending with something like a unilateral

Catalonia, Wales and so on pursue their aims mostly through conventional politics.

The East presents a quite different picture. One of the ironies of stalinism was its combination of real but unadmitted Soviet control with the semblance of exaggerated national sovereignty – a version of sovereignty which was as old-fashioned and extreme as it was phoney. Economic integration in the Comecon area is minimal, and the currencies are not freely convertible; trade is conducted slowly and painfully by governmental agreements and often in terms of barter; politically, the component Warsaw Pact nations have had no close relationship save that which runs through Moscow. The mutual ignorance of the populations is amazing, for a system whose official

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ideology is internationalist. To take an example, the number of Czech or Polish students studying in each other's countries is pathetically small. In these conditions of political and economic autarky, old national prejudices have been preserved in the stalinist and post-stalinist deep freeze. The heavy official emphasis on history and patriotism, even though it was imported from the Soviet Union and even though much of the history was false or incomplete and known to be so, only reinforced this nationalism. Ancient disputes, whose very mention was forbidden, festered merrily in the popular memory.

So Central and Eastern Europe slowly warms up, and we cannot be sure that certain wounds won't begin to bleed once more. It is worth listing some of them – leaving purely internal tensions aside. There is the justified Romanian claim to Bessarabia, now the Soviet republic of Moldavia, and to the north Bukovina which forms part of the Ukraine. There is the Hungarian-Romanian dispute, which at present is not (thank heaven) about frontiers but about Romania's bullying of the huge Magyar minorities in Transylvania. There is tension, similar but less spectacular, about the Magyar minority in Slovakia, across the Danube. There is the complex but highly explosive tangle of disputes over Macedonia, which involves Yugoslavia, Greece and Bulgaria. There is the Kosovo nightmare, which must in the end involve an Albanian-Yugoslav confrontation if it blazes up uncontrollably. There is still unsettled business between Austria and Yugoslavia about the Slovene minority in Carinthia, who are not happy with the way Austrian politics are moving. Poland is likely, sooner rather than later, to raise openly with the Soviet Union the treatment and rights of the substantial Polish minority in the Western Ukraine (East Galicia), although the new 1945 frontier would not be challenged. The difficulty of finding smooth and discreet disputes procedures in this part of Europe is illustrated by the fairly petty border dispute between Poland and the GDR over the coastal waters off Świnoujście, in which naval guns have been fired. And that leads to the biggest of all the wounds which may re-open: the division of Germany.

The Poles, for good reasons, see this as two wounds: that of the partition of rump-Germany into two in 1948-9, and the earlier wound inflicted when eastern Germany was annexed by Poland and the USSR in 1945 and its population expelled. I cannot believe that, at more than 40 years' range, anyone will try to challenge Poland's western frontier on the Oder and Neisse. But the future of the two existing German states is now enigmatic. It can be taken as certain that the West do not want German reunification on any terms: they do not even want the GDR to retain after 1992 its peculiar status as the ghostly extra member of the European Community. But things have changed so much now that one can't exclude a scen-

ario like this: the Socialist Unity Party (SED) régime attempts a radical reform but releases forces it cannot control; authority passes to a quite different political group; the inter-German and Berlin frontiers become permeable; a *de facto* German confederation from the Rhine to the Oder appears and the Soviet Union decides that this is a development it can tolerate. We can only guess whether, in fact, the USSR would tolerate it. But as arms and forces reductions and evacuation of all foreign armies proceed, the two pacts are bound to wither – which is a stated Soviet objective. And the withering of the pacts means that nobody will be able to hinder a German coming-together, short of reunification, if the Germans wish it.

The notion of a united, neutral Germany as main European partner has an ancient appeal to Russian diplomacy. All the same, there will have to be some remarkably good reason to persuade the Soviet Union to abandon the secure position in Central Europe which the existence of the GDR provides. The attitudes of the West Europeans, especially Britain and France, are not entirely different. The division of Germany and of Berlin forms a sort of rug on which stands the top table reserved for 'Victor Powers of the Second World War'. If the division ends, the rug is rudely pulled away from under them, and – sprawling on the common ground – they cease to resemble powers.

To sum up: while Western Europe integrates more closely, the rest of Eastern and Central Europe may develop quarrels, some historic but others – perhaps – new. Is the Helsinki security system strong enough to contain such quarrels? That system was built on the tacit assumption that each superpower would wish to police its own half of the continent. Now it seems that the Soviet Union is removing the pressure which kept those quarrels latent. Does that also mean that the Soviet Union no longer feels that it has any duty to intervene and bang heads together if the quarrels – once released – develop into conflict? If that is so, then the security order designed by the Helsinki process has to be revised: some authority not just for building confidence or measuring force levels but for active peace-keeping has to be constructed.

The second cluster of uncertainties is economic – or perhaps 'geopolitical'. What will be the economic relationship between this powerful, unified West and that newly-emancipated, reforming but atomised East? The history of that relationship isn't encouraging, and severely qualifies talk of the 'common European house'. Left to itself – or to 'market forces' – the relationship for much of the past century has been semi-colonial. Around the last decades of the 19th century, the German *Mitteleuropa* vision developed and became influential. Roughly, this envisaged an extension of German power to the south-east, into the Balkans, across to Turkey and eventual-

ly by rail-links (the *Bagdad-Bahn*) into Mesopotamia and Arabia. The European part of the vision assigned south-eastern Europe to the role of providers of raw materials and food. Capital and what industry was required on the spot would be German, but these territories would essentially be the backyard and kitchen garden of the industrialised West. In the first world war, *Mitteleuropa* became a war aim, enriched by the hope of adding the Ukraine and other spoils to the empire. Hitler's design for a Eurasian land empire whose industrial engine-room lay in the Germanic West was an extension of all this.

Between the wars, with Central and Eastern Europe the site of new 'successor states' to the old empires, the semi-colonial plight of the region was obvious. (Bohemia always excepted: the Czechs, with their high level of industrialisation and tradition of precision engineering, were really part of the West.) Factories were rare, and most private industry was owned by foreigners. Currencies were convertible against those of Britain, France or the United States, with catastrophic results in hyper-inflation. Agriculture was completely defenceless against price and demand fluctuations, and the Europeans who suffered most from the soaring birth rates, plunging prices for grain and acute unemployment, their situation by the end of the 1930s was desperate.

What was authentic about postwar state socialism in those countries was the attempt to repair that damage and ensure that it could never recur. That was the rationale for collectivisation; for the breakneck industrialisation after 1948 designed to soak up surplus rural population and provide each country with a complete, national industrial economy; for the rupture with the free-trading world outside. We know why that experiment failed – and why some think that it could never have succeeded. What we forget is why it all seemed so necessary in the first place – and whether, in the intervening years, a better answer has been found to Europe's uneven development.

I am not sure that it has. The relations between the United States and the debtor nations of Latin America could find a new parallel in Europe, as 'new model' reforms wash away the remains of socialist protectionism and expose over-staffed, inefficient local industries to market competition with the Brussels super-state. Again, the Helsinki provisions concentrate on economic co-operation and exchanges, which seemed so important 15 years ago. What is required today is a new European plan, a grand social and economic strategy to prevent a reversion to dependency, to guarantee that Europe east of the Community will not be reborn politically only to grow up into a destiny of providing iron ore, fruit and vegetables, and cheap labour. It would be bitter indeed if the landscape after the cold war consisted only of one vast, advanced economy with a periphery of bantustans.●



Identikit Europe

The idea of 'Europe' is a comparatively recent one. John Keane argues that European identity is contested to this day, a fact which ought to temper the new-found enthusiasm and optimism about European unity

Europhoria is here. To many people's surprise, the ideal of European unity seems to be blossoming. The contrast with 50 years ago, when Europe was a dirty or suspect word, soiled by Mussolini's talk of 'European civilisation' and Nazi propaganda against 'Asiatic and Jewish Bolshevism', is breathtaking. Today, most observers openly welcome the Single European (1992) Act. There is even a tide of British enthusiasm towards Paris, Brussels, Strasbourg and Bonn.

This spirited drive for European unity prompts some vital questions. What or who is this 'Europe' which is on everybody's lips? Is there such a thing as a uniquely European

identity? Such questions require answers which are sensitive to the historical development of the European ideal and mindful of the dangers of attempts to mask its plurality of meanings.

The idea of Europe is a child of the modern world. Spawned by disillusionment with religious wars and persecution, it ousted Christendom from the 15th century onwards, becoming a name for a continent and a symbol of a whole way of life. During the 18th century, despite the fact that the region was constantly at war with itself, Europe was generally accepted as a symbol of cultural unity and moral, political and technological superior-

ity. Europe represented progress and liberty, Asia and the rest of the world stagnation, barbarism and despotism. This idealisation survived into the 19th century, but the 20th century brought it crashing to the ground.

The European spirit which had once decorated the fashionable spas of Baden-Baden and Karlsbad and the *belle époque grandeur* of Palermo dissolved into nightmares of muddy trenches, mustard gas and corpses. Europe was destroyed twice by war, then partitioned by barbed wire, border guards and concrete walls. By partitioning Europe between them, the Americans and the Russians tried to guarantee that it would cause them no further headaches. They failed. Central and Eastern Europe is now the most extensive crisis zone on the earth.

This crisis is the legacy of decades of turmoil, of an epic struggle to define the traditions according to which a new Europe might be forged. It is the expression of a crisis of identity on a continental scale, of a period of trauma

and coming to terms with the fact that an era of cultural and political dominance has ended. Europe has been forced to abandon the imperialist assumption that the European spirit should rule the world.

Among the legacies of this trauma are Europe's bruised nationalisms which are dangerously sensitive to the emergence of cultural traditions and identities associated with the post-1945 wave of migration into Europe of nearly 20m people, many of them from former European colonies. These new Europeans represent the largest single recorded movement of people in history and contribute to the rich and complex web of identities which stretch across the continent.

The present push for European economic and political unity is an attempt to refurbish the old image of princess Europa as wealthy, free and powerful. But the contemporary bases of European unity are highly complicated and unpredictable. Like it or not, the cultural identity of Europeans is older and more di-



Ian Hands

verse than the present division of Europe into a few dozen states and far more complicated than the image of a single integrated market.

There have been many Europes and their presence is still felt today: agrarian Europe and industrial Europe; the Europe of Byzantium; the Europe of the Carolingian empire and its successor, the EC; the Europe of nationalism, patriotic cultures and disaffected national minorities; Christian Europe and the Europe of the Romans, Jews and Muslims. Such historical differences can be felt to this day in the Perpignan foothills, in Nowa Huta and Titograd, in the church squares and market places of Venezia and Kiev, and in the Turkish communities in Berlin and Frankfurt. They ensure that 'Europe' will remain an awkward rallying cry in the future.

Divided by religion, national identity and custom, and kept apart by 50 different languages. Europe contains a variety of regions with uneven traditions of active citizenship which are

strongest in the west and weakest in the east. Even the geographic frontiers of Europe are disputed. Is Turkey in Europe or in Asia? And why should Russian civilisation be considered, by Milan Kundera and others, as the radical negation of Europe when it clearly lies within its cultural and geographic limits?

Historical factors have intensified disputes about the ultimate value of European culture. For some, Europe means Greece or Rome, or Christianity, or unique poetry, music and philosophy. Others continue to defend the 18th-century belief that Europe is the home of liberty. Those sympathetic to 19th-century ideas of technocracy, such as Jacques Delors, hail the formation of a new 'European Village' as a pathbreaking 'human venture' in economics and government. Others repeat Sartre's harsh dismissal of post-colonial Europe as a fat, pale, murderous region, whose fingers on every corner of the globe must be slashed until she lets go.

These disagreements about

the meaning of Europe ensure that attempts to persuade its inhabitants to regard themselves as homogenised 'Europeans' are bound to fail. Europe cannot exist as such unless it reaches explicit agreement with itself that it is riddled with diversity and (potential) conflicts.

To be a European involves recognising and valuing the existence of a collectivity which protects and encourages diversity. That is why nationalism, Christian and Islamic fundamentalism – forms of life which demand the exclusion of every other form of life – remain the biggest threat to the diversities of European identities.

Napoleon and Hitler both attempted to impose one version of the idea of Europe upon its populations. A third attempt would undoubtedly also end in disaster. That outcome can be prevented only by blocking the advance of exclusive ideologies by developing a federal system of democratic institutions which ensure a dynamic equilibrium between various individuals, groups, regions and movements.

Proposals for a federated, democratic Europe especially irritate the nationalists of this region. In France, Yugoslavia, Britain and elsewhere they are already polishing their well-worn argument about the ancient contrasts which prevent European union. They tell us that the differences between the French and the Germans, Serbs and Slovenes, and the British and the continent undermine any ideal of European unity.

This decadent prejudice feeds upon historic fears and popular anxieties but it is anti-democratic, dangerous and unconvincing. Differences of language, gender, class, religion, skin colour, sexual preference and national identity among the inhabitants of Bavaria, Languedoc and Sicily do not threaten the national unity of Germany, France and Italy. There is no reason why they should do so in a federation of free European states. A Pole, Turk, Scot and Czech reading Heinrich Böll, Edna O'Brien or Marguerite Duras in transla-

tion can experience similar passions, hopes and fears.

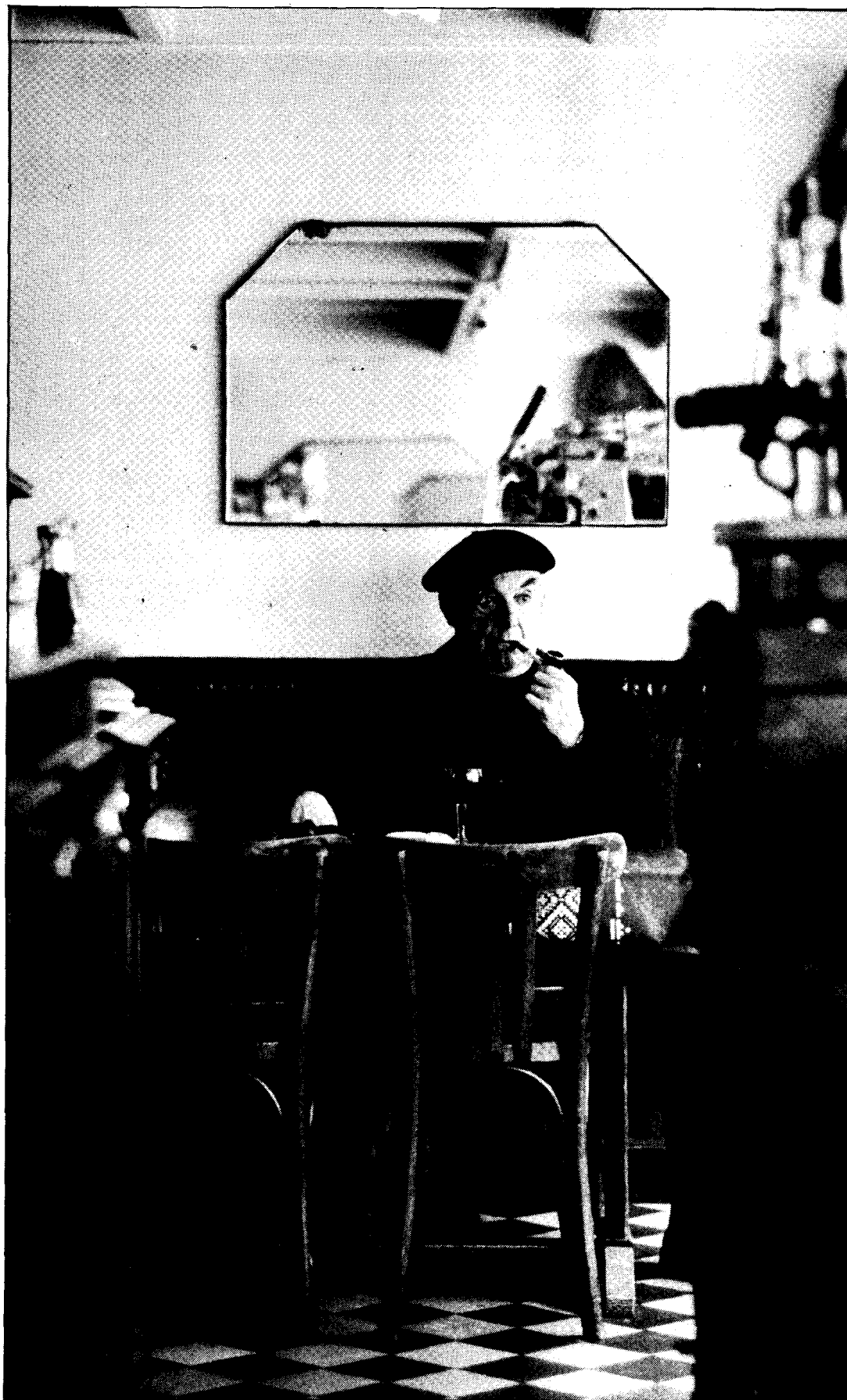
Above all, heart-felt nationalists overlook the point that a federated Europe is the only way of preserving the concrete facts of national identities. They can be protected only by securing the freedom of citizens from arbitrary government. This involves the elimination of the sovereignty of the nation-state.

The 'Europeanisation' of Europe requires the development of a shared sentiment of belonging to a collectivity larger, older, more diverse and henceforth indispensable for the preservation of particular identities within it. This *mentalité* remains too weak within a Europe still full of jealously-guarded national identities. It can be built only on respect for old democratic traditions.

A European public spirit also requires an understanding of the long-term impact of imperialism on Europe itself. It calls for deep respect for those cultural traditions and identities – of Bengalis, Moroccans, Chileans, Afro-Caribbeans and others – which now contribute to the diversity that is contemporary Europe.

The technocrats of Brussels tend to focus solely on the forging of political and economic institutions. They fail to take into account the cultural diversity of Europe. There is a danger that the one-dimensional definition of Europe peddled by Nato and the EC will shut out the Poles, Russians and Czechs, marginalise those groups which have settled in Europe over the last decades and extinguish their right to history.

The development of a federated, democratic Europe containing a genuine plurality of identities would undoubtedly spell trouble for the vision of Europe as a monolithic market place which is embraced by Thatcherism. This limited vision refuses to face up to the cultural implications of a new phase in the struggle over the definition of European identity. Europhoria is here indeed, but the long-term cultural implications of European integration have yet to be grasped. ●



Cartier Bresson Magnum

A Mood For Mocha

Café culture, argues **Lon Fleming**, is a challenge to the British pub

The culture of the café is generally assumed to have a distinctly continental mood. It is a central feature of a frequently mythologised European way of life. Similarly, the culture of the pub is a key feature of Britain's identity. But as we move towards further integration with the rest of Europe there is a new wave of interest and fascination with the café in Britain. The adoption of trendy cafés by high-profile sections of metropolitan youth and the development of the Dôme chain of cafés present a potential challenge to the status of pub culture in British ways of life.

This is not a new phenomenon. There have been a series of waves of imports of different kinds of café culture from Europe. These have included the interwar Central European settlements with

Turning Les Rosbifs

British cuisine, suggests **John Carr**, should no longer be the butt of Europe's jokes

'English cooking is old-fashioned because we like it that way. We do enjoy foreign dishes and admire Continental cooks, but when we cook the foreign dishes, the dishes, like the foreigners, become "naturalised English".' Written in 1954, Dorothy Hartley's classic statement in her book *Food in England* amply demonstrates how 'foreign food' has, in recent times in Britain, been the object of pity, derision or condescension, or all three. Foreigners either ate unspeakable things or 'messed about' with their victuals in an effort to disguise their unappetising or unwholesome nature. Never

Café Culture: A frequently mythologised way of life, as clear and as complex as pub culture

the emergence of cafés in places like Hampstead and Golders Green. And in the 50s, Italian imports from the Vespa to the coffee bar complete with gaggia inspired new associations and myths.

But what exactly is a café? Café culture in Britain could take in a range of places, from the transport 'caff', the venue of British working men, to tearooms, the domain of middle-class women, both of which are firmly closed at six in the evening. But the term is more often used to evoke quite different atmospheres and milieux. Café culture extends through the evening. It is the terrain of both sexes, different ages and different ethnic groups. It connotes a whole way of life both as clear and as complex as pub culture.

The café offers a number of different pleasures. While the clientele of many English and European cafés may focus on interior elements – the decor, the band, people at other tables – café culture is still structured through relations with the world outside. People read newspapers, write and talk. Conversation is more integral to café culture than to

that of the pub.

The café is outward looking. Its habitués are on display at the windows and on pavement terraces. When people sit outside, they sit in front of cafés. Pubs are more closed spaces and if people sit outside it is usually in the beer garden behind. The relations of looking are two-way in café culture, simply because the pavement, the street and the world outside are an integral part of the café scene.

Café culture is also distinguished from pub life by the way it relates to the division of the working day. It might appear to be linked more closely to consumption – witness the cafés in shopping centres and department stores which are still largely the terrain of women – but in Europe it is structured predominantly by waged working hours. Throughout France and Southern Europe where work starts early in the morning and resumes late in the afternoon, cafés are frequented early in the mornings when alcoholic drinks, as well as coffee, are served. The end of the working day is marked by the *promenade*, a stroll around the streets and

squares, looking and being looked at, itself culminating in a visit to the café.

British leisure continues to centre round the pub. While there is no pure, homogeneous pub culture, the recognition of, and easy integration into, the routines of pub life constitute two of its chief pleasures. This is especially intensified in the local pub with its regulars, but is available in some form to all pub users. In spite of attempts by brewers to diversify pub environments, they continue to offer homogeneity and familiarity whether it is the pub sign, the on-street entrance, the organisation of the bar and the usual (annoying) location of the women's lavatories furthest from the bars, or the notorious call for 'last orders'.

Gender organisation is a central feature of pub culture. Pubs are for the lads – of any age – and women alone in pubs are the object of the look of the male insiders. The pub is the traditional heart of masculine culture. Pub gardens and family rooms are peripheral. Entertainment is organised around the dartboard, the snooker table, the video machines and the juke

box. The pub has a sense of interiority, of closure. The focus is, of course, the bar, which is constructed as the heart of the community from *Coronation Street* through Albert Square to Archerland.

Whatever its limitations, the pub is spreading on the continent just as the culture of the café is sinking its roots deeper into British traditions. A standard version of the British pub is now available throughout the European Community, a portable home for British male working-class identity. And it's not just in the coastal resorts of Southern Spain, but increasingly in urban centres where it acts as a focus for the mobile labourers of the European market.

As work schedules in Britain become increasingly variable, with even larger sections of the workforce in part-time employment, café culture with its two-way looks, its engagement with the outside world and its more equal place for women and children, looks set to expand. It offers a new set of social relations and a diversity with which the pub is unable to compete. ●

mind the truth, feel the image. Rule Britannia. We even reigned supreme in the kitchen.

One wishes one could say that continental opinion of much of what, historically, has passed for the popular British kitchen was equally favourable. To the French we are '*Les Rosbifs*'. ('the roast beefs'), a phrase which rather aptly conjures up a horribly familiar picture of an unimaginative meat-obsessed nation. The phrase *à l'anglaise* still means 'plain cooked'.

1992 will not herald the sudden arrival of an amorphous, worrying, garlic-smelling 'Euro-grub'. Rather it will simply underline a trend which has been underway for some time: the opening up of the British hearts, minds, palates and kitchens to European (and wider) influences. But there are still important differences between British and European attitudes towards the preparation and consumption of food.

In Britain those who dream of themselves as chef-proprietors

in neat little restaurants are usually middle-class, looking forward to serving their own kind. A French bourgeois would no more entertain such a notion than jump in a wine lake. Becoming a second Sartre would be more likely to fulfill their fantasy.

In France the kitchen has been a traditional route for working-class or peasant kids to make it into the big time. Had they lived 100 or so miles south of London, Henry Cooper or Frank Bruno might just as easily have ended up as superchefs, rather than superboxers. But it is no longer 'cissy' for a British male to be interested in cooking. Many boys in working-class areas now even learn cooking at school. Unheard of not that long ago. And if anything, women chefs are more prominent in the UK than across the water.

The move towards a greater 'food consciousness' in the UK has been very much a part of the new consumerism and de-

cidedly a middle-class led phenomenon. But cheap holidays abroad, the global nature of 'agribusiness', marketing on tv and immigration have helped spread the word up and down the social order. In a number of European countries, but most notably in France and Italy, a mass culture exists within which food is revered, even exalted: placed near the pinnacle of the hierarchy of pleasures. Eating is a more social activity. The painful formalism of some UK hostels simply horrifies and perplexes foreign visitors. In Italy you would be thought insane if you apologised for bringing your children to the restaurant.

Just as Dorothy Hartley has had her day over here so, over there, Britain is deservedly gaining a reputation for getting serious about food. We are no longer a culinary desert. Today the wine shelves of the average branch of Sainsburys would stand comparison with, indeed easily surpass, the great major-

ity of their continental counterparts. The access we have to wines from all over the globe is rarely repeated over the Channel. Your average Safeway would put to shame the fresh food sections of a good many European supermarkets.

The growth in the sales of, entries in, and interest surrounding the British editions of *The Good Food Guide* and the red *Michelin Guide* are further evidence of progress. A new British cuisine is emerging. Its style and presentation draw heavily on foreign, particularly French, influences. But the ingredients often have a traditional edge to them: ginger, cinnamon, quinces, spices and sound, rich stocks are some of its hallmarks. Our vegetables are once again becoming recognisable: being eaten fresh, young and crisp with a minimum of cooking. Britain's culinary renaissance may yet inject new life and pose new challenges to its complacent continental cousins. ●

A Thousand Beams Of Light

The era of national broadcasting in Europe is drawing to a close. But grand, standardised, pan-European designs, argues **Geoff Mulgan**, have stumbled on a Europe of cultural difference and regional diversity

For 40 years European television operated within national boundaries. Control might be in the hands of the regions (as in Germany) or of social organisations (as in Holland), but in most countries, including Britain, broadcasting was seen as a legitimate extension of the national state. The state determined what people could or could not see, what constituted fairness in news, and what was 'good' as opposed to 'bad' culture. Overseen by the state, broadcasters offered a mass, standardised service produced on a production line in vertically integrated institutions. The tradition was essentially social democratic. Broadcasting was seen as something to be rationally planned and directed downwards to improve the populace.

This tradition is now breaking down. The number of channels in Europe has more than doubled in only a few years. The new channels have brought new owners and new commercial interests in many countries. Italy was the first, with its dramatic deregulation of broadcasting in the mid-1970s, the proliferation of hundreds of independent local channels and, subsequently, their equally dramatic consolidation into Berlusconi's two networks in the 1980s. In France and Spain socialist governments have used deregulation to give new channels to their political allies, just as the British government is using it to tip the political scales to the right. Cable networks are slowly spreading in all countries giving access to dozens of foreign channels. In the small countries of Europe broadcasts always spilled over frontiers. But with the advent of satellites and cable

networks, the spills have become a flood. The very idea of national broadcasting has begun to crumble, and with it the idea that a nation can give its culture its own political roof.

It's still not clear what will replace the social-democratic tradition of national broadcasting. Rupert Murdoch's Sky channel offered one answer: 'pan-European' television would allow all Europeans to watch the same tv channels, just as they might listen to the same music and wear the same clothes. The idea was immediately appealing to the advertisers. It promised them the chance to target whole swathes of the European market with standardised images advertising standard brands like Coca-Cola and British Airways; applying Fordist principles in an industry traditionally attuned to cultural difference and nuance.

Language too had to be standardised. Like Europe's 'satellite newspapers', the *International Herald Tribune*, the *Financial Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and Maxwell's promised paper, *The European*, Sky broadcasts in English. It's a standard language to complement standard electricity sockets, shoe sizes and measurements.

Murdoch was not alone in his faith in European television. He was soon followed by the ITV companies, by Robert Maxwell, Silvio Berlusconi and Ted Turner, and by bit players like WH Smith, all eager not to miss out on this new licence to print money. The European Commission was also captivated by the vision of 'television without frontiers', a free trade zone for tv to go with the internal market for shoes, washing machines and toasters, a single Europe

made manifest in the beam of a satellite.

In the real world pan-European television has been a flop. The grand plans have stumbled on a Europe that stubbornly refuses to behave as a single unit. After losing millions each year, Sky closed nearly all of its European offices in January 1989. Last year's near bankruptcy and sale of Superchannel, the 'best of British' project supported by the ITV companies, confirmed that the bubble had burst. Satellite broadcasting has turned out to be something rather different than expected.

Although most of 50-odd channels beaming down on Europe from satellites have the technical ability to reach much of Europe, most are aimed at regional and linguistic blocs: Sat 1 and RTL Plus at Germany, Austria and Switzerland, TV3 Scansat at Scandinavia; La Cinq, M6 and Canal J at France, Belgium and Switzerland. Those channels that aim more widely, such as Sky and Superchannel, Maxwell's MTV-Europe or the American channel Cable News Network (CNN), either lose vast sums of money or else reach miniscule audiences. The real battles are taking place within the regional blocs, between the new channels and older ones responding with more populist, entertainment-orientated programmes.

The standardising, mega-Fordist vision of pan-European television has proved to be a false start. No-one has been able to describe what a genuinely European channel might look like. The attempt to do so soon reveals the fissures in the very idea of a European culture. Europe remains a continent of heterogeneity, of violent struggles over meanings, languages and histories. Apart from the tensions between France and Germany or Britain and Ireland, innumerable regional and ethnic differences lie beneath the demarcations of the nation state, and are reflected in television. Catalan tv, Walloon tv, Welsh tv (S4C), and



Bavarian tv have turned out to have stronger political bases than a nebulous concept of Euro-tv.

Then there's the 13th nation of Europe, pressing hard for a role in post-1992 Europe, the Arabs of Paris and Marseilles, the Turks of Berlin, the Punjabis of Bradford or Southall. As British viewers of the Asian cable channel Indra Dhnush are aware, the new technologies of broadcasting can localise as well as globalise. Europe is no longer, if it ever was, a coherent place of white people, liberal-rationalism and faith in progress. If anything, that idea of Europe survives more powerfully east of the borders of the EC. Several thousand satellite receiver dishes in Poland, Sky viewers in Hungary, VCR owners in Eastern Europe as a whole and millions of East Germans watching the West's television act as a re-



an integrated 'broadband' infrastructure of fibre-optic cables for the late 1990s, a network with limitless capacity, ultimately capable of allowing a viewer in Belfast or Oporto to call up a Pasolini or Wenders film, a Bayern Munich football match or a Spanish discussion programme. If realised such a network would dramatically change the cultural landscape. It would also spell the end of the nanny-state, social-democratic tradition: even Lord Rees-Mogg would be hard-pressed to keep tabs on several hundred channels from across the continent.

The ultimate promise of the broadband network is that it could take control of television away both from the state and from the private corporation. The network would be open and flexible, able to respond to the specialised needs of a Pentecostalist John Wayne fan in Birmingham, a DIY fanatic communist in Pisa, or a feminist film buff in Copenhagen. Control would pass both upwards and downwards. Up to the European level, to agencies responsible for overseeing the economy of broadcasting, and down to local and regional bodies with the power to give licences and to fund local channels.

Achieving the cultural potential of a broadband network will depend on political will and imaginative planning at both these levels: levies and taxes on the bland channels full of imported material; public funding agencies to finance minority material, the bizarre, the challenging, the investigative; ownership rules to break up the conglomerates; independent European news services to tell us what the European Parliament and the commission are up to on our behalf; guarantees of universal access and industrial plans to distribute tv production to the regions.

Who knows, in 2010, rather than being an endless cycle of *A-Team* repeats and Pepsi ads, European broadcasting might even be something to be proud of. ●

David Fathers

minder of how hard it is to define the boundaries of Europe.

But perhaps the biggest problem in defining a European television culture is the problem of America. Traditionally what defined European television was the fact that it was *not* American. Quotas and controls protected Europe from the onslaught of the world's most powerful television economy. Even private channels made much of their aversion to the baser pressures of commerce associated with American tv. In the 1980s much has been made of the need for European alternatives to *Dallas* and *Miami Vice* such as *Black Forest Clinic* and *Chateauvallon*. Aware that the US and Britain are the world's top two tv exporters, Mitterrand's cultural minister, Jack Lang, tried to create a Latin 'audio-visual space', linking France

to Iberia and Latin America so as to counter Anglo-Saxon domination.

The problem with all of these approaches is that for 80 years American culture has been more than an alien import. In the form of the detective novel, the Hollywood film, soul and jazz music, it has also often been a more popular culture, more open, more alive and more attuned to a working-class experience than the high culture promoted by European states and broadcasting systems. This history allows the new channels, dependent on US imports, to parade as the populist alternative to dull, paternalistic public service. Sky even cheekily described itself as 'alternative television'. That the European Left still responds to the threat of 'wall-to-wall *Dallas*' with calls for a new Europe-wide channel of opera and theatre

shows just how poorly this history is understood.

The problem of America also raises the question of how we respond to US cultural imperialism in an age of American decline. This is, after all, the era when Sony owns CBS, when an ex-Australian owns 20th-Century Fox and with it much of the American film heritage and when Italian tv is littered with imports from Brazil and Mexico as well as more predictable American ones. There are already signs that *Dallas* and *Dynasty* are having to give way to *Neighbours* and the tele-novelas.

Battles over the television markets of the future have helped to put broadcasting at the top of the European Commission's industrial agenda. Backed by most of the EC governments (with the notable exception of Britain), the Commission is planning

Show me Britain dressing for 1992 and I will show you a child that doesn't want to grow up. And a Victorian nanny that won't let it. While fashion in the rest of Europe has been shaken up by the great challenges and adventures of modernism, Britain clings to the skirts of a cosy pre-industrial heritage. Open the nation's closets and you will find a wardrobe of hand-me-downs, cricket stripes, pinstripes, schoolgirl pinafores, schoolboy blazers, tails, toppers and tweeds.

We live in a culture of mothballs, a culture that wraps itself eagerly in the imagery of yesterday. In spite of a whole generation that have learnt to dress in modern (imported) sportswear, it is still widely believed in Britain, that 'traditional' and 'old fashioned' is the only proper way to appear. For we have *always* dressed like that and that is how it *should* be.

This is not true. Nostalgia is a crisis of confidence, a fear of the future, not some sweet quirk of individuality. Britain is not nostalgic by nature but by circumstance. Victorian Britain did not look back wistfully to the good old Georgian days when they knew how to make a house properly and chaps could wear coloured breeches with impunity. 60s' Britain did not people its television with men in immaculately pressed white linen, nor its advertisements with ragamuffins in fairisle jumpers.

80s' Britain, however, behaves as if the past were the only decent place to live. Those who aspire within its society do not covet the shiny goods of modernism but the tarnished treasures of the past, or at least those that mimic the past. Rooms are filled with the stuff of the great country house: the big upholstered sofa, the grandfather clock, the real fire, chintz. Catwalks are thick with imitations of old snobberies, from hunting jackets to smoking jackets.

It is not the loss of 'our' currency or 'our' apples that makes Britain drag its feet so unwillingly to market, but the threat of losing this manufactured past. Modernism, the



Fallow fields of fashion: Nostalgia is a fear of the future

Top Hat Traditions

Rooting around in the dressing-up box of late-80s' British fashion, the thoroughly modern **Charlotte Du Cann** can find nothing to wear for the great European fancy-dress parade of the future

culture of the rest of Europe and of the future, is a frightening, bold concept for the British to grasp. Modernism is something ugly like the South Bank. Something difficult and pretentious like a James Joyce novel. It is something vulgar worn by Joan Collins in *Dynasty*. It is Jonathan Ross showing off in an Armani suit. Modernism is not behaving according to the rules. It threatens to make our lives unpleasant and cheap. We are afraid that if we go 'European' and 'mod-

ern' we might lose all our colourful tradition and merge into a monochrome mass.

But what is this precise heritage and tradition? Some old tailoring and mumsy old knitwear: some old punks posing in Kings Road for Japanese and American cameras. What purpose does any of this serve, except to preserve Britain as a theme park for the benefit of the tourist industry? What talent can possibly flourish here where the philistine and the parochial are constantly

rated above the cultural and the universal?

This roseate version of the past perpetuates a system that should have gone out of style a long time ago. It's a system that says there are lords being bountiful in the castle and peasants working merrily in the fields. For so they sit, the nouveaux top hats gleefully guarding their untaxed hoards, and there they sit, the second-hand cloth caps pretending that Aneurin Bevan is going to come back after all and save the day.

These are stagnant and obstructive images. It is time we let down the drawbridge and liberated these besieged islands. If the things we care for so much disappear, then they were not worth the keeping. If we lose our tailors and shoemakers, it is because we need new clothes not old ones.

European modernism is neither stagnant nor obstructive. It assumes that life is not fixed but open to possibility and change, that a suit can be made in many different ways and not just that decreed by tradition. It assumes that anyone can get to eat in the best restaurants and understand ideas and not just those who had the benefit of the 'right' education. It assumes that anyone can inherit the earth and not just those who dress and behave like 18th-century landowners.

European modernism does not embalm the imagery of the past but uses it to feed the present. If designers in Europe re-invent the frockcoat they do it for its cut, its swaggering qualities, its form and not its symbolism. In Britain the frockcoat is chosen to celebrate a colourful tradition, to continue the charade.

But who wants to live in a land of make-believe? Who wants to be shut in a nursery all day long, even with the best dressing-up in the world? No, nanny is wrong. You will not catch your death if you go out without your hat. You will be bold and free. You will be living in a culture that is vital and progressive and walks abroad in a spirit of bare-headed egalitarianism, rather than hiding beneath the ghost of your grandfather's hat. ●



Gaultier suit: European modernism uses the imagery of the past to feed the future

Boom Banga Bang

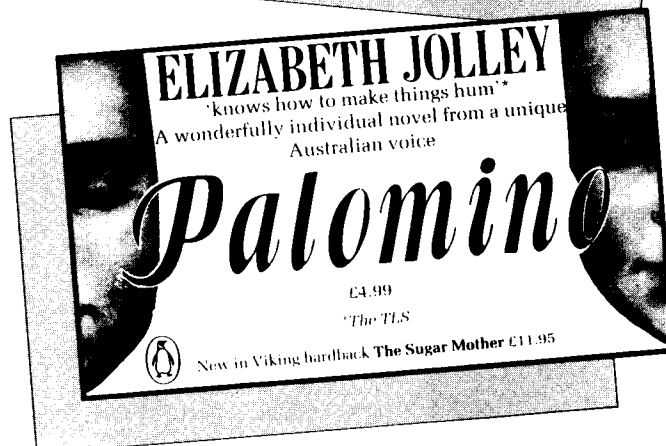
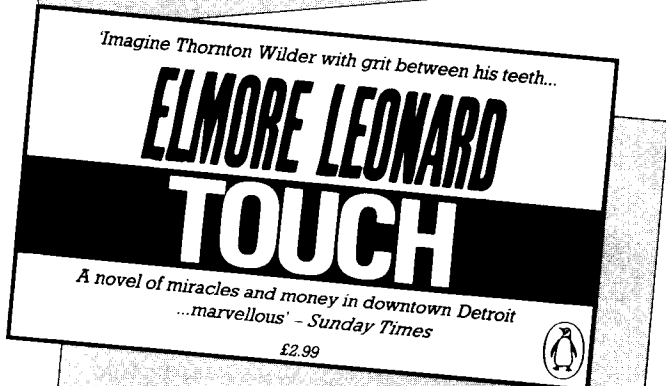
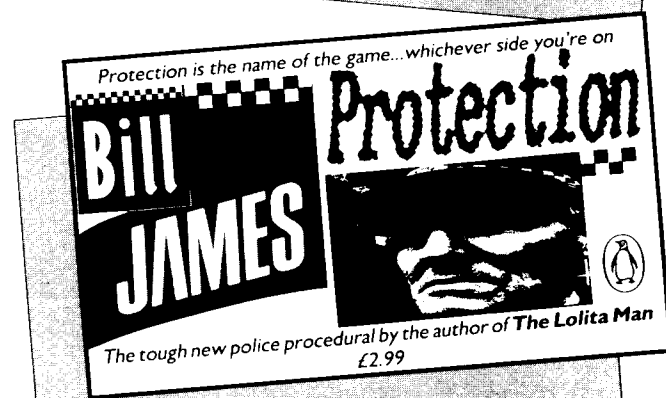
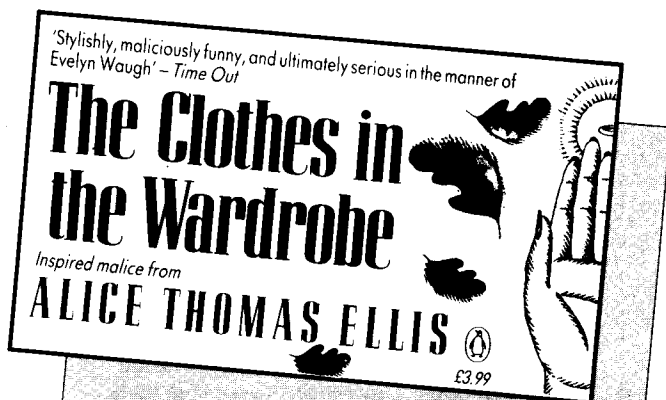
National heats for the Eurovision Song Contest begin in April, heralding the search for another 'Song for Europe'. Eyes glued to the scoreboard, **Lucy O'Brien** is rooting for Norway

Whether it's Cliff Richard doing his strange twiddle-legged dance through 'Power To All Our Friends', Brotherhood Of Man in those amazing cream flares, or Katie Boyle simpering and pronouncing the immortal phrase: 'Norvège: deux points', we all have an image of the Eurovision Song Contest in our minds. But, apart from Abba, no act since the contest's heyday of the early 70s has remained long in the international public eye. The song-writing standards have failed to keep pace with modern production techniques, and most 'serious' artistes avoid it like the plague.

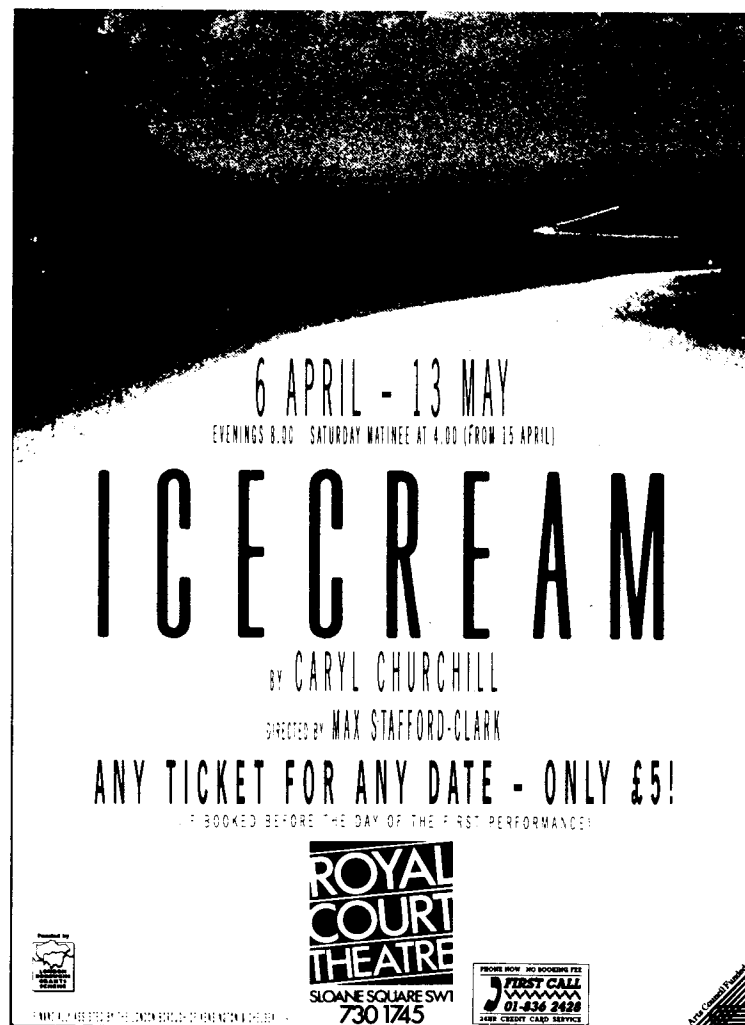
Yet the show still goes on, amassing more viewers each year, and attracting yet more countries. This year Cyprus will be the 22nd country to join the sparkling roll-call that includes such strange bedfellows as Sweden, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Iceland and, of course, the UK. An estimated 600m viewers (including 75m in the Soviet Union) will settle down to watch the marathon transmitted live from Switzerland on May 5. Lolita Morena, former 'Miss Photogenic Universe' and mistress of five languages, will be our pert Italian-Swiss presenter, along with the suave Swiss Olympics sports journalist Jacques Deschenauz. They have to ensure that the show, with over 800 performers, composers, directors, officials and tv reps taking part, flows smoothly and accessibly. With 33 national tv organisations simultaneously transmitting their every move, that could be a nerve-wracking prospect.

The contest wasn't always so

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large. Back in 1956, a measly seven countries participated in the first event – Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Switzerland. It was set up in a postwar atmosphere of creative cultural co-operation, the brainchild of a group of programme pioneers within the Swiss-based European Broadcasting Union. Eurovision was devised as a high-profile promotion of cross-border tv programming. What better way to do that than via those great common-denominators music and song?

According to the early regulations, the initial aim of Eurovision was 'to encourage the creation of original songs and to stimulate, by means of international competition, a spirit of friendly rivalry between writers and composers'.

Each participating tv organisation (one per country) was to present a song of three minutes duration. An international jury was divided into separate rooms to watch the contest on their own tv sets. The judging procedure has become more sophisticated over the years, but there are still sceptics who maintain that there's more of a spirit of rivalry than friendliness in the voting process. This mildly nationalistic pop parade has the

'It is a spectacle of enthusiasm and bonhomie that erases rather than celebrates difference. Something that began as a cross-cultural media event has become a case of positive PR and bland razzmatazz.'

perfect combination of populist entertainment and intense competition. People keep watching to see who wins, who nearly wins, and who ends up with *deux points*.

Like *It's A Knockout*, *Miss World* or the *Grand Prix*, Eurovision has more to do with tv and PR than with international co-operation. It is a spectacle of enthusiasm and bonhomie that erases rather than celebrates differ-



Cliff Richard: Twiddled his legs for all our Euro-friends

ence. Like *Sky* magazine, Eurovision adopts a simple pan-European parlance, hence the 'Boom-Banga-Bang' ditties and middle-of-the-road string arrangements. Even language differences are being ironed out as more and more entrants conveniently sing in English. Something that began as a humanist, cross-cultural media event has, over 33 years, become a case of positive PR for television, and bland razzmatazz.

The show has an annual momentum of its own, set apart from the day-to-day runnings of the European music industry. Phenomena like punk and hip hop, for instance, have scarcely dented its presentation. In the 60s and early 70s it was a promotional vehicle for chart stars like Cliff, Sandie Shaw, Lulu and even Olivia Newton John, who didn't consider it too embarrassing for their recording careers. During the last ten years, though, Eurovision has taken on an increasingly middle-aged hue, and less credibility among young record buyers.

The contest follows a tv formula that's predictable in its

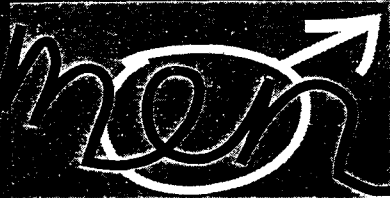
glitzy uniformity. Adopting a secure middle-of-the-road mode, it ignores the challenges of current global pop; the onslaught, for instance, of Parisian/Algerian rai, Belgian new beat, or British rap. To take such cross-fertilisation into account, as well as the impact of pop's new technology, Eurovision would have to be rethought and restructured. No more orchestras, no more homogenised songwriting, no more plonky refrains and obedient performers.

In the end, of course, it's the scoreboard our eyes are drawn to, the subtle hierarchy of nations (where will Turkey come this year?), and the nail-biting sense of competition for its own sake. Whatever the cultural possibilities of 1992, this is a presentation of Europe that remains resolutely in the 70s. And it leaves only one question on everyone's lips: can Norway do it this time round? ●

Continental-List

EU & Non-EU

Strasbourg	Westminster
Football	Cricket
Glasgow	London
Golden Delicious	Granny Smith
Abba	Bucks Fizz
Willi Brandt	Norman Tebbit
Butter mountains	Bad eggs
Jetfoil	Sealink
Milan	Milton Keynes
Smurfs	Wombles
Perrier	Lucozade
Jack Lang	Kenneth Baker
Cappuccino	Instant whip
Marlene Dietrich	Gracie Fields
Munich	Bavaria
Two-pin plugs	Ear plugs
Tutti frutti	Apple crumble
Dukakis	Bush
Human rights	Get-out clauses
The Body Shop	Boots
Boots	Wellies
élan	flan
Chantal Cui	Sue Lawley
La Dolce Vita	Educating Rita
Rifat Ozbek	Paul Smith
Winos	Lager louts
Marie Claire	Woman's Realm
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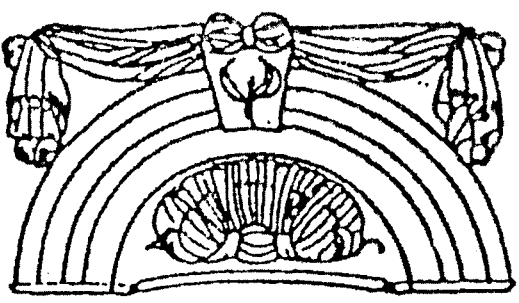
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Eastern Experience

Among contemporary writers, suggests Karin McPherson, the term 'European' applies to few with greater justification than to the East German author Christa Wolf whose latest novel *Accident* is to be published in English in May

Christa Wolf has played a major role in bringing the literary scene of the GDR to the attention of the West. Over the last decade, her work has continued to focus on many of the burning issues of our time. Celebrating her 60th birthday this year, she has written six major 'fictional' prose works (five of which are available in English translation in Virago), a number of shorter stories, many essays and autobiographical prose sketches. She has given a number of interviews which have recently been published in English translation under the title *The Fourth Dimension* (Verso £7.95 pbk).

Wolf has enjoyed the unusual privilege of frequent visits to West Germany and many other European countries. As a result, her works have been translated into more than 20 languages and are the subject of a large network of international literary conferences, critical studies and university syllabuses. Although her books are described by official critics in her own country as being complex and unyielding to easy reading, her reputation as a major writer is secured by her great popularity with the reading public.

During her only visit to Britain in May 1978, Christa Wolf presented herself as a socialist writer with a strongly developed moral conscience. Having read from her novel, *A Model Childhood*, she raised the issues of individual and collective responsibility for fascism which, she firmly believes, can never be 'overcome' by official policies, but remain part of the heritage of her generation.

Asked in an interview in 1982 conducted for the East German newspaper *Welt-*

woche if it could be said that it was her generation's unique universe of historical experience which had made her a writer, Christa Wolf replied: 'Perhaps no generation will ever be "put through the mill" as much as ours was: from the almost devastating experience of being turned into the object of history, to the often demanding and even over-demanding nature of the attempt, in the literary world too, to become its subject.' Here Wolf confirms that her position as a writer and as a person is unimaginable without a changing self-examination within the framework of socialism.

The theme of Wolf's major fictional prose work of the later 1960s, *The Quest For Christa T*, was a self-exploration through the medium of a literary figure whose individuality and untimely death from leukemia had prevented her from fitting into the young socialist society of the 1950s and early 60s in the GDR. This novel challenges the official normative style of socialist realism. Its subject matter and language have aroused controversy and heated debate among GDR critics.

In spite of the 'fictional' character of her major prose works, the characteristic feature of all Christa Wolf's prose is its openness towards her own autobiography. Living and writing are part of the same process to her, which may explain why all the central characters of her books are women. Yet, the author's horizon, her range of experience, has extended with every successive work: from the setting in the present of the early years in the GDR, in her first fictional works, *Moskauer Novelle* and *The Divided Heaven*, to

her own immediate past in *A Model Childhood*.

From the late 1970s onwards, Wolf extended her search further into the past, as far back as the early-19th century, to find the first generation of women caught in the conflict between social restrictions and artistic vocation. The novella *No Place On Earth* has unmistakable parallels with Christa Wolf's own situation: the protest by herself and a number of writers and artists against the expatriation of the political song writer Wolf Biermann in 1976, for example, led to her expulsion from the executive com-

West, while at the same time giving clear signals of her deep disquiet and pessimism about Europe's survival after the stationing of Pershing and SS 20s in both Germanies.

Accident (Virago, £5.99 pbk), her most recent and most autobiographical fiction, is based on diary entries noted down on receiving newsflashes after the Chernobyl disaster in May 1986. Wolf links her fears for the future of mankind with the penetrating search for the 'blind spot', the subconscious and parapsychological dimensions of the human mind. In the process she



Christa Wolf: 'My main motive is one of self-exploration.'

mittee of the writers' union.

In the early 1980s, the search for the social and historical co-ordinates of the mythological figure of Cassandra and her link with the present, signalled Wolf's entry into the debates about feminism and the peace movement in Europe. In four lectures on aesthetics and the story *Cassandra*, Wolf shared her discoveries of the Minoan (matriarchal) and the Greek (patriarchal) cultures on a journey to Greece and Crete in 1980. She outlined her reading of the feminist discourse, based on her experiences with the women's movement of the

questions the linguistic structures she has inherited and even begins to doubt whether she can continue writing at all given the dangers facing Europe, dangers which have been dramatically highlighted by the Chernobyl disaster.

Wolf continues to combine such self-exploration with the analysis of major contemporary concerns. It is almost as though, by challenging barriers within herself, she challenges the barriers between different ideologies. In this way she addresses a question which is central to the survival of Europe. ●

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Green Europe

The Turning Green Tide

The green agenda is here to stay. A profound cultural shift in environmental awareness has swept Europe. **Tom Burke** explains its origins, and suggests how the European Community may be our best hope to help our planet survive

Green is the new political colour in Europe. Greens sit in the Bundestag, in both Houses of the Belgian parliament and in Italy's parliament. They are credited with having ended Bruno Kreisky's decade-long domination of Austrian politics and with being a constant thorn in the flesh of Helmut Kohl. There is a multinational Green Group in the European Parliament. In 16 out of the 17 European countries which hold free elections, green parties have been formed and presented candidates for election. Fledgling green parties are also to be found in both Poland and Hungary, reflecting the importance of the environment as one of the most dynamic thrusts of *perestroika*.

But for all this, it is only in the last six months that the environment has risen to prominence on the international agenda. Unusually for an event of such political significance, this change can be traced to a precise date. Margaret Thatcher's 'green' speech to the Royal Society on September 27, 1988 startled both her distinguished audience and the world.

Subsequently, both Gorbachev and Bush have also placed considerable emphasis on the environment. The competitive squabbles surrounding Mrs Thatcher's ozone conference in London and Prime Minister Rocard's meeting in the Hague the following weekend are a sign of things to come. The environment has joined national security and management of the economy in that rarified zone where national leaders rather than mere ministers are the principal players.

Last summer witnessed a sharp change in public mood on the environment. A swift succession of incidents, from the drought in the American grain belt, to seal deaths in the North Sea catapulted the environment into the popular papers for the first time. The image of a sick planet became firmly established in the public mind. This mood was reinforced in the UK by an outbreak of attacks on the government's environmental record across a spectrum that stretched from Michael Heseltine via Paddy Ashdown to Neil Kinnock.

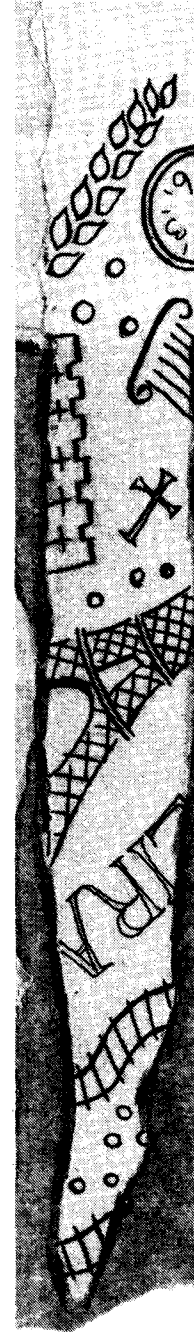
There were other indicators that an important, and possibly permanent, shift in the politics of the environment took place

during the course of 1988. In September, Gollancz published *The Green Consumer* amid a blaze of publicity. It rapidly rose to the top of the best sellers' list and remained there for some weeks. Two major marketing organisations simultaneously published studies on the green consumer. Both studies independently came to the same conclusion that a great many consumers, especially women, would prefer to buy a greener product were one available at roughly comparable price and product performance.

Their findings were powerfully reinforced by the decision of Tesco's to launch a green consumer campaign at the beginning of January this year. It was closely followed by similar campaign from Sainsbury's. The success of Germany's 'Blue Angel' scheme for marking environmentally-friendly products and the preparation of similar schemes in Denmark suggest that these changes are also occurring elsewhere in Europe.

Environmental organisations have also been experiencing unprecedented growth in membership, with some bodies recording 20-30% growth rates. In 1983, the membership of Britain's en-

'There are said to be more members of environmental bodies in Denmark than there are people'



environmental bodies was estimated at about 3m people, more than the combined membership of all the political parties put together. The current figure is now likely to be nearer 5m, or about half the combined membership of the trades unions. They currently employ some 1,500 full-time staff and spend about £150m a year. If the experience of some Scandinavian countries is anything to go by this explosive growth has by no means reached its limits. There are said to be more members of environmental bodies in Denmark than there are people, since such a high proportion of the population belongs to more than one organisation. The European Environmental Bureau, a coalition of 120 member organisations from the 12 countries of the European Community, claims a total membership of over 20m people.

The greening of Europe is thus a very broadly-based phenomenon. It now encompasses the orthodox political parties of both Left and Right, the non-partisan pragmatists of the pressure groups, a significant and growing proportion of the mass of ordinary people and its own high priesthood in the greens and deeper greens who make up the activist membership of the new green parties. This suggests that we are witnessing a deep structural change rather than a realignment of existing forces, a cultural rather than simply political transformation.

The green parties are popularly regarded as a wholly-new phenomenon in politics. In fact, they belong to a persistent tradition that runs throughout European history. Much of what passes for radical politics, whether of Left or Right, occurs simply at the level of ideas. Too often it becomes a search for difference for difference's sake and drifts inevitably into intolerance and extremism. The 'radicalism' of the green parties is mostly of this kind. Their existence and rapid proliferation does say something authentic about deep anxieties in our society and they have undoubtedly had a catalytic effect on the greening of other parties. But their vote is limited. They do not offer themselves as serious candidates for government – their programmes are assemblies of wishes with little indication of how the necessary relationship between the present and the future is to be articulated. Nor do they seek to build the stable constituencies of support necessary for the achievement of office in a democracy.

They fit firmly into the tradition of revolutionary millenarianism so well described in Norman Cohn's *The Pursuit Of The Millenium*. Petra Kelly is a familiar figure from among the prophets who have appeared frequently in European history at moments of intense social stress. The green parties, as modern millenarians, emerged much as Cohn anticipated in 1969, from among 'certain politically-marginal elements in technologically advanced societies – chiefly young or unemployed workers and a small minority of intellectuals and students.' As

Green Turns

Seveso, Italy: 1976 chemical factory accident releases poisonous dioxin cloud into the air. 193 reported cases of severe skin disease, plus longer-term cancer and cirrhosis fears.

Three Mile Island: The most serious US nuclear accident, 1979. One hour away from reactor-core meltdown. Large-scale evacuations and international horror.

Bhopal, India: 3,300 killed and 180,000 injured in 1984 as a result of a poisonous gas leak from Union Carbide pesticide factory. Battle for compensation still unresolved.

Rainbow Warrior: Greenpeace ship blown up in 1985, while docked in Auckland harbour, NZ. One killed. Two French intelligence agents convicted of the attack.

Chernobyl, USSR: World's worst nuclear disaster, 1986. Radioactive fallout detected throughout Europe. 135,000 evacuated, unknown number of associated deaths.

Sandoz: 1986 chemical warehouse fire on the banks of the Swiss Rhine. Toxic water polluted the river, killing fish and eels to the North Sea. Ecobalance destroyed.

Brazil: Widespread radiation contamination of about 1,000 people in 1987 after a lead canister was accidentally opened by a scrap dealer. ●

such, they are of real, but passing, importance.

There is another greening of European politics that is radical in a more genuine, less self-conscious sense. It reflects the daily experience of many millions of Europeans. There is nothing ephemeral about this change and it occurs more often at the level of choices than it does of ideas. Although it may appear differently from country to country as circumstances, culture and political structures modulate its manifestations, the underlying experience, and the anxieties and aspirations it evokes, is common to all Europeans of the postwar generation.

This greening of Europe derives from the experiences of ordinary people. It is the common experience of decaying city centres, of industrial squalor, of the dirt and discomfort of public transport and of the growing volume of noise that invades workplace and home alike. It is the direct experience of landscapes transformed from the familiar to the alien by intensive agriculture and mass tourism. It arises very personally from fears about additives in food, pesticide residues in water and fallout from nuclear facilities. It is an experience that has produced its own

litany of fear: Torrey Canyon, Amoco Cadiz, Seveso, Sandoz, Chernobyl, the Karin B, Thalidomide, Opren, E-numbers. These are intimate and direct experiences of the degradation of the environment.

They are reinforced by the surrogate experiences made available by mass communications, especially television. We have all witnessed the rainforest on fire or the bloody slaughter of a great whale. The spread of the deserts or the human misery that follows drought or other natural disaster takes place in our living rooms. The course of the Chernobyl disaster's consequences was charted day by day on our television screens. As train crash follows air crash in swift succession across our screens the public needs little persuading that things can go wrong. Hence the deep public distrust of chemical plants or nuclear power stations that their proponents find so difficult to understand.

These experiences, the intimate and the surrogate, have generated the deep anxieties that are one part of the ground of the greening of Europe. There is another, more positive aspect to this change, moved by aspirations rather than anxieties. The period since the second world war has been one of unparalleled peace and prosperity for most Europeans. Affluence undreamt of by our grandparents has become the norm for the four-fifths of the population typically in employment in most European countries. The dominance of quantitative personal goals that so marked the 50s and 60s is beginning to give way to the pursuit of quality. The aspiration for a better life now contains a spiritual, as well as a material, dimension. Care for nature and the environment or for cultural heritage is just one manifestation of this deeper dynamic.

Thus our anxieties and our aspirations are conspiring to make the environment a more central preoccupation for all in Europe. Politicians and political parties from all parts of the orthodox Left and Right have been slow to respond to these changes. Voluntary organisations, scientists, even some businesses, have all got there before them. It was precisely the political vacuum thus generated which permitted the emergence of the green parties. But the arrival of the orthodox politicians legitimises and reinforces these anxieties and aspirations. As was the case with the acceptance of the welfare state in Britain in the late-40s, an already-high level of public sensitivity and expectation on the environment precedes political intervention. A cultural change, taking place in the base of society, is being stabilised and strengthened.

The greening of politics is important not just for its impact on the immediate agenda, but because it represents the first attempts of the generations born since 1945 to grapple with the politics of a wholly-altered world. Since the end of the war, a stifling orthodoxy, born of the rigidities imposed at Yalta and the emo-

'An already-high level of public sensitivity and expectation on the environment precedes political intervention'



tional scars on a generation of leaders whose formative experiences were of war, has permeated and frequently paralysed European policy-making. It is interesting, in these days when we have so much more understanding of the long-term effects of traumatic stress, to recall that Denis Healey began his political career as a young major just back from war. Like so many of his contemporaries across Europe, he has only just faded from the centre of the political stage.

Perhaps a shrinking-away from global responsibilities was all we might have expected from a generation of decision-makers preoccupied with the aftermath of defeat or the retreat from empire, and for whom the 'world view' of a Hitler, Stalin or Tojo were all too real a threat. The intense effort required to combat the drive for global domination seems to have left as its legacy a generation of leaders whose idealism and imagination have been cauterised. But this will not do for the future. The now-universal image of a painfully beautiful blue and white planet set against the deep black loneliness of space has become an emblem of our times. We have no choice now but to think, act and feel globally.

But the reflexes missing from our parents have not been lost to the European people. They are to be found in force among those born since 1945. Three experiences, wholly new to humankind, mark the consciousness of this generation: the threat of nuclear war, the destruction of the environment and the magnitude of global poverty. The vigour of the political impulse to which these experiences have given birth is apparent. Massive popular movements, often intensely international in both spirit and practice, and led for the most part by members of this generation, have swept Europe in the past three decades. The peace, environment and development movements, the women's movement and the variety of social action movements, all growing outside of orthodox political parties and, for the most part, contemptuous of them, have been the leading-edge of social change. Their abrasive attempts to break the grasp of the post-war orthodoxy on Europe's political agenda have been, until the recent arrival of Gorbachev, the only source of originality and vitality in European policy-making.

These movements are no more spasms of reaction against progress than they are simply movements of Left against Right. Rather, they represent far deeper shifts in the emotional ground of European politics. A new generation is giving voice to new concerns pressed upon it by the new, and intolerable, conditions under which we live. It is inheriting the institutions and resources so painfully reconstructed by its parents in the long slog since Potsdam. In bureaucracies, staffrooms and councils from Aberdeen to Athens, the emerging leaders are those born since 1945. For the next 20 years their choices will dominate the fate of the earth as they become the arbiters of the orthodox. It will be a green orthodoxy

Trading Health

Might Europe save the fortunes of the roadside daffodil? Or instead strangle the tulips? The EC Commission intends to set new Europe-wide mandatory limits on exhaust emissions and lead levels in petrol by 1992. These will have to be the same in all member states, or else they will constitute technical barriers to trade.

This is a dilemma for the ecology-conscious Dutch, who want to reduce exhaust fumes to US levels and are offering tax incentives to people who buy cars with the superior catalytic convertor. The case is going before the European Court later this year. Article 100(A) of the SEA permits local variations in market conditions if public health is at risk and this will be the Dutch defence. If they lose, then their only hope to keep Amsterdam as clean as they want will be to restrict car ownership and charge for car entry into cities (as do Hong Kong and Bermuda).

The banning of leaded petrol in the EC from October 1990 will ease the Dutch difficulty, as at present the catalyst required to reduce exhaust emissions to US levels reacts adversely with leaded petrol, producing gases even more noxious than ordinary fumes! Meanwhile, the Dutch and the tulips may be in for a tough time. ●

shaped in part by circumstances and in part by the anxieties and aspirations which we share.

We arrive at a propitious moment. One of the key institutions we inherit is the European Community. And we do so when it is making the difficult transition from economic to political union. No area so well illustrates the possibilities of the Community as a vehicle for idealism and vision as the environment. The creation of a common policy on the environment is one of the great, and largely unrecognised triumphs of the Community. It is customary to complain of the slowness of the Community in arriving at decisions and the need to compromise in order to achieve agreements. These complaints are often justified. But no-one looking at the environmental legislation now in place, and at the growing pressure on member states to comply with it, could imagine that such a comprehensive set of measures would ever have been adopted in so many countries had every government been left to its own devices.

The European Community is unique. It is the only democratic supranational law-making body in the world. Nowhere else have nation-states agreed to surrender an

element of national sovereignty in the common good. Not surprisingly, nowhere else is there a comparable set of binding policies to protect the environment across national boundaries. This body of law now comprises more than 200 separate statutes. We are approaching a more complex future, in which twice as many people as now live on our planet will have to co-ordinate their policies closely if the very conditions that make life possible are not to be undermined. The experience of the past 15 years will be invaluable.

The European Community is the only laboratory the world presently has in which to develop the full range of tools – legislative, economic, administrative and political – that will be necessary for planetary management. No other international forum, for example, combines environmental and economic policy-making within the same institution. Yet if we are to create a greener world, the interdependence of the environment and the economy has to be the basis of policy.

1992 and the creation of the single market raises these stakes. Many environmentalists fear the single market. They worry that it will simply be an opportunity for industry and that it will lead inevitably to pressure to lower environmental standards. They see a trade-off between vigorous economic growth and the quality of life with the one only able to improve at the expense of the other. This misses the point. It is not an accident that the worst environmental degradation is to be found in the countries with the weakest economies. Even inside our own country, it is in the economically-weak inner-cities and centres of uncompetitive industry that our environment is at its worst.

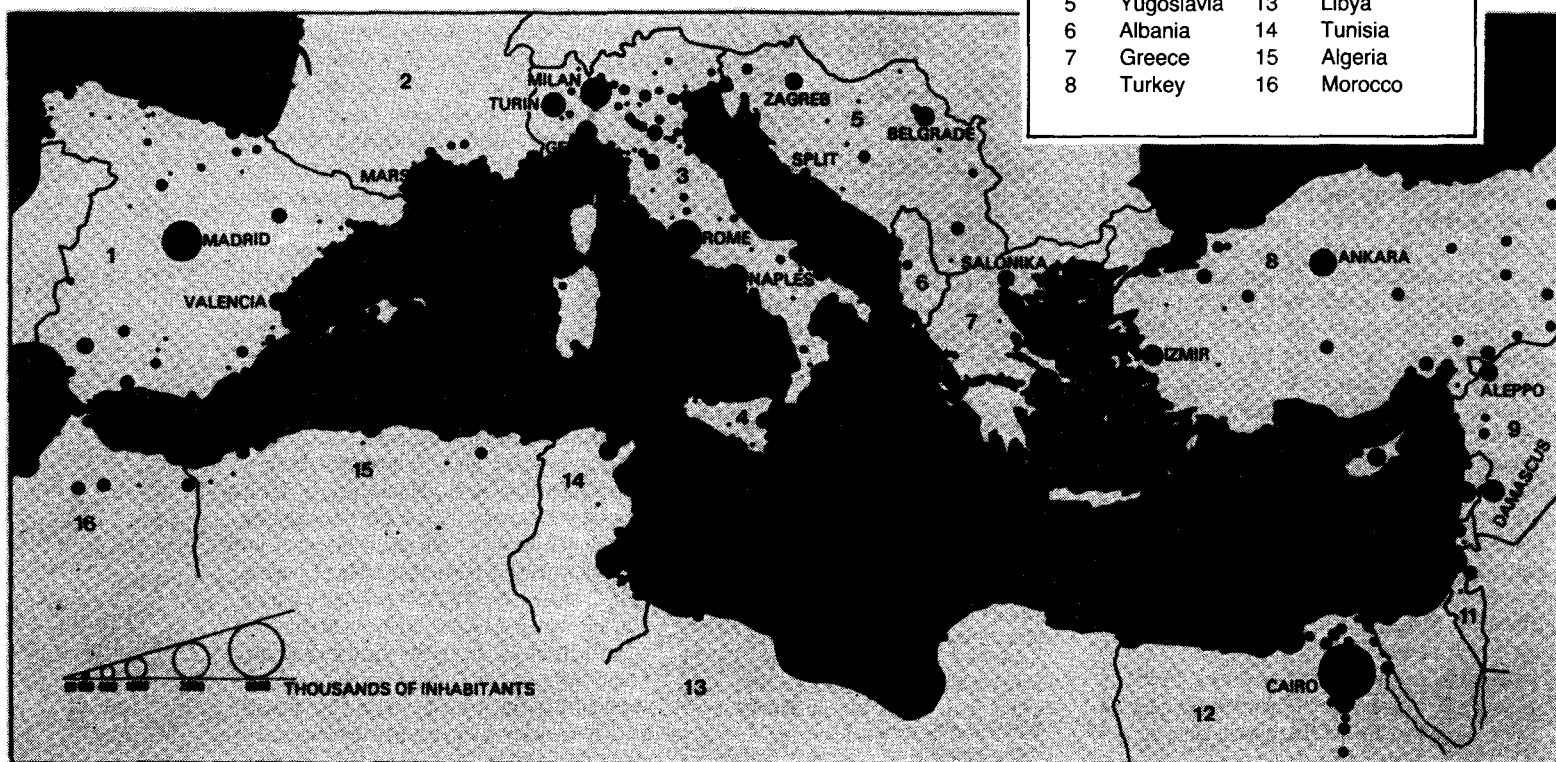
Every problem is also an opportunity. Far too much of the environmental debate has concentrated on the problems and far too little on the opportunities thus created. Much more effort has been placed on constraining the bad than has gone into encouraging the better. The social forces that impel the greening of Europe are substantial. The European Community provides a mechanism through which to give them expression and in the emerging generation of decision-makers there exists both the sensibilities and the experience to bring them together.

Success in this venture is as important for the planet as it is for Europe. The challenges we face are, however, more political than they are scientific, technological or economic. The political art is to bring science, technology and capital together in a sustainable manner. And to do so democratically, for no such scale of public endeavour could hope to succeed without popular consent. The European Community as a democratic political construction offers the world both a laboratory and a model with which to explore the tools of planetary management. The generation now inheriting it has an awesome responsibility to realise its possibilities. ●

'The environment has joined national security and management of the economy in that rarified zone where national leaders are the principal players'



- | | | | |
|---|------------|----|---------|
| 1 | Spain | 9 | Syria |
| 2 | France | 10 | Lebanon |
| 3 | Italy | 11 | Israel |
| 4 | Sicily | 12 | Egypt |
| 5 | Yugoslavia | 13 | Libya |
| 6 | Albania | 14 | Tunisia |
| 7 | Greece | 15 | Algeria |
| 8 | Turkey | 16 | Morocco |



Countries of the Med: Major population centres of the Mediterranean Basin (based on *Statistical Yearbook UN*, 1974)

Green Europe

The Southern Suntrap

The Mediterranean is evocative of sun, sea and Mañana. But the southern European countries are changing rapidly, as **Russell King** explains

For the average Briton or north European, southern Europe is a holiday destination, a place where, for one or two weeks each year, in a paradise-like environment of sun, sea and sand, hedonism reigns supreme. Little do we understand that such environments are artificially created to satisfy our commodified, packaged tastes. Little do we know of the real processes underpinning the transformation of Mediterranean societies and landscapes. Even the location of our holiday destination may be only dimly perceived — witness the lack or imprecision of maps in holiday brochures.

The main thing is to get there fast — 'flight time two hours' — and enjoy yourself. To say that you have seen Spain when you have been to Benidorm or Torremolinos is to say that one understands art after seeing an Andy Capp cartoon. The popular image of the Mediterranean is thus restricted to a few coastal locations where the essential, manufactured elements of the holiday package prevail.

However, venture a few kilometres inland from the coast, into the rugged mountains of the Sierra Nevada for instance, or the pullulating back streets of Naples or Istanbul, and another scene is discovered, of poverty, deprivation, street urchins and slums: the Third World of Europe.

As the European Community (EC) moves, seemingly inexorably, towards 1992, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that growth will continue to accu-

mulate in the core areas of Europe — regions like London and the south-east of England, Paris and Randstad Holland — to the relative detriment of the periphery. The hoped-for spread of this growth to the edges of Europe once the economies of these marginal regions have been shored up by structural and regional funds (the vision of EC President Jacques Delors) is probably over-optimistic.

It is true that the pace of economic growth in most of Europe's Mediterranean countries has been rapid over the past 30 years; in many instances and for many sequences of years, this rate has exceeded those recorded by the industrialised countries of the north. But two caveats must be entered here. First the percentage growth rates in the south are exaggerated because they are measured against low base levels. Second, an examination of the type of growth reveals that the new industrial and touristic developments are mainly externally controlled, a process linked to the internationalisation of the European and world economies. The spatial division of capital and labour, clearly expressed in Western Europe through the core-periphery pattern, relegates to the southern periphery the role of reproducing a low-grade labour supply, which since the 1950s has migrated to fulfil the needs of the industrial economies of the core for cheap workers.

While it is true that, at least since the 1970s, capital has reached out in tentacles to colonise certain nodes in the

periphery, the ownership of this capital, and therefore the destination of any profits, remains rooted in the major European and world financial centres.

Typical of the new industrial developments which have mushroomed around Europe's Mediterranean coasts are the oil refineries and petrochemical complexes which, with their red and white hooped chimneys hissing and glinting in the southern sun, are symbolic of the brave new world of southern industrialisation. Sadly the brave new world was short-lived. The oil crises of the 1970s and early 1980s killed off their *raison d'être*; demand for their oil, chemical and acrylic fibre products fell and, especially in Italy, financial corruption destroyed their credibility. Environmentally disruptive, such plants also compromised the touristic vocation of many stretches of pristine coast.

Ecological damage continues. At a time when West German chemical firms are having to spend one-third of their research and development budgets on anti-pollution devices, relocation to countries where environmental protection laws are lax is an attractive proposition. When the savings on anti-pollution measures can be combined with easy access to natural resources the attractions are even greater — as the examples of wood pulp-processing in Portugal and bauxite at Itea in Greece attest.

Thus the economy and landscapes of southern Europe have not only been transformed but also deformed. This is the case not just in the physical sense (for instance the despoliation of olive groves downwind of the Tranto steelworks in southern Italy), but also in the debasement of economic, political and even cultural values, and in the exaggeration of regional inequalities. Capital is not interested in balanced regional development; it is interested in accumulating maximum profits and this normally implies locations where labour, infrastructure, transport and a market are available.

The Greek case is typical. The famous cloud that hangs over Athens — a noxious smog produced by industry, central-heating systems and the excessive number of cars circulating in the city — is a potent symbol of the deformed nature of Greek development. By 1980 35% of the total Greek population resided in Athens. As well as people, national and international capital are drawn into the city in a process of accumulation stage-managed by the national economic and political leaders. Short-term interests prevail; spatial planning is weak and ineffective. Agriculture has never been recognised as an important variable in the economic planning process. Instead it was viewed as a residual sector, a reserve of potential cheap labour, with emigration promoted as an instrument for reducing the social pressures of poverty and unemployment. The Greek regional problem cannot be solved ex-

cept by far-reaching decentralisation of political power combined with a committed programme of public investment in economic and social infrastructures in regions other than Athens and Thessalonika.

But industry is only part of the story, and perhaps no longer a major part. In most southern European countries the tertiary sector dominates, contributing 50–60% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Italy, Spain and Greece and 40–50% in Portugal and Turkey. When invisible elements like money sent back by emigrants or profits from shipping are included, the proportions rise further.

Tourism and emigration are both heavily dependent on external forces. Emigration is almost wholly controlled by the countries receiving the migrants, as illustrated by the events of 1973–4 when West Germany, Holland and France abruptly halted in-movement from non-EC countries. Tourism contains a double dependence: on the metropolitan countries for the capital to finance tourist facilities such as hotel chains, and on those same countries to sustain the mass tourist flows to the Mediterranean. Tourism also poses problems of interpretation as to whether it is fundamentally a good or a bad thing. The less well-off, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the Mediterranean region, generally welcome mass tourism. Wealthy locals, affluent tourists and foreign social scientists lament it. Indeed some development specialists regard the massive annual transfer of 100m tourists to the Mediterranean shore as 'an extreme form of neo-colonial exploitation, a systematic device for the destruction of everything that is beautiful'. On the other hand, the local attitude is summed up in the Ibizan saying: 'If the tourists stop coming there are not enough pines on Sa Talaia [the highest hill on the island] for the people to hang themselves from!'³

Compared to the industrial pollution of Athens or Barcelona or Genoa, tourism is a factory without a chimney, a cleaner form of development altogether. But there is a darker side — the corruption of traditional values by ill-mannered visitors, the subservient nature of so much touristic employment, the problem of seasonality, the demands hotels make on local scarce resources, notably water, and the dramatic impact made on the built environment. Already a ribbon development of hotels and tourist services encloses almost the entire Mediterranean coast of Spain, France and Italy. Greece's fragmented coastline has suffered less. The battle between mass tourism with its speculative construction boom and landscape conservation has now been carried to Turkey where 400,000 British tourists visited in 1988, a doubling over the previous year.

Away from the concrete coasts, rural areas are becoming increasingly differentiated by a wide range of social and

economic processes. In the rugged highlands continuing depopulation causes the degradation of thousands of villages which, along with their stony fields, crumble into oblivion. In other areas, slightly more favoured, emigrant money and even return migration bring some of the lifeblood back to rural communities. Many coastal plains and river valleys have benefitted from farm rationalisation and irrigation, creating oases of agricultural prosperity such as the newly-settled plains of southern Italy or the Spanish *huertas*. In central and north-eastern Italy rural industrialisation is well underway, turning traditional craftworkers into modern entrepreneurs. Finally, in scenic areas such as Tuscany and Umbria, agri-tourism offers a viable strategy for revival, following the French model of *gîtes* (rented cottages) and rural camping.

The external political relations of southern Europe are also changing. The enlargement of the EC has brought Spain, Portugal and Greece firmly into the European fold; together with Italy and to a lesser extent France, they form a solid bloc of Mediterranean power in Brussels. Already the common agricultural policy (CAP), for years geared mainly to lining the pockets of already-rich north European farmers, has shifted to a concerted strategy of helping Mediterranean farming. The fact that the next two EC presidents will be from Greece and Spain should further strengthen the interests of the Mediterranean tier.

Yet the southern European countries also look increasingly uneasily, across the Mediterranean Sea. Events in Libya (which shelled the Italian island of Lampedusa after the American bombing of Tripoli), in Lebanon and in Israel-Palestine form key parts of the pan-Mediterranean consciousness of these European states, as well as being threats to their security. Co-operation with all other Mediterranean countries (except Albania) takes place on the vital issue of marine pollution control. But regional conflicts, for example over Gibraltar and over Cyprus, impose strains between EC members (Britain and Spain) or between existing and would-be members (Greece and Turkey).

On a global scale, the Mediterranean has become a front line in East-West power politics. In the past the Mediterranean has been seen as a centripetal force unifying the countries around its shore by ties of empire, trade and culture. Increasingly it is being made a shatter belt between power blocs of conflicting ideology and religion. The uncertainties of the world are now the uncertainties of southern France. ●

¹ R Hudson & JR Lewis in AM Williams (ed) *Southern Europe Transformed*, Harper & Row, 1984.

² M Nikolinos in R Hudson & JR Lewis (eds) *Uneven Development in Southern Europe*, Methuen, 1985.

³ Quotations from J Boissevain in D Seers, B Schaffer & ML Kiljunen (eds) *Underdeveloped Europe*, Harvester Press, 1979.

'The economy and landscapes of southern Europe have not only been transformed but also deformed'



M-T HEARTS

● **Sincere**, successful, United States doctor (Ph.D) university professor, 38, 6'2½", slender, Irish descent. Seeks slim, attractive Irish redheaded lady – Provisional supporter preferred – 20-35yrs. For serious relationship leading to marriage. ALA. Photo appreciated. Box 2.

● **Socialist male**, bookish weight-trainer, 41. Exercised but not exercised. Seeks female companion, initially for stretching weekends. Midlands based. Box 3.

● **Sensitive, intelligent, attractive female**, late teens. Loves the Arts and Literature seeks caring relationship with older man. Photo appreciated. London/Surrey area. Box 9.

● **Socialist Woman** – 36, London. Wants to revolutionise her life by sharing demos, films, cuddles, city and country life with like male. Box 11.

● **Intelligent**, not uncomplicated, adventurous, attractive, generous woman, 30, with a sense of humour: interests – politics, current affairs, anthropology, arts, cinema, cats, hillwalking, skiing. Seeks loving permanent relationship with active, intellectually minded man. Edinburgh area. Photo appreciated. Box 12.

● **Male, 26**, warm, tall, intelligent, articulate, socialist, vegetarian, seeks like-minded female (20-30) for mutually affirming relationship. London/South. Box 13.

Avril Jarrett and Nick Guy are to be united in matrimony and in (hopefully) peaceful co-existence on April 1st 1989.

MESSAGES

● **Baby Swoopig** – Amy Louise Crabb. Welcome to this post-modern world of ours. Hope you like it. Lots of love, Jennie.xxx.

● **Monster**: Happy 23rd!! Love Down-Under piglet.

● **Birthday Notices II**: May 15th approaches again. Another sharing experience? I'll bring a tape recorder this time. J.

VIDEO

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M-T EVENTS

● **National**: Marxism Today is beginning preparatory work on our national event for 1989. This will take place at City University, London over the weekend October 27/28/29. If you would like to get involved in any capacity please get in touch. No previous experience necessary. Just lots of enthusiasm, initiative and imagination. Phone Mark Perryman on (01) 608 0265 or write to MT (Events) 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY.

● **Wolverhampton**: Marxism Today discussion group meets third Tuesday every month, CCR building, 2, Clarence Rd, Wolverhampton. 7.30pm.

Marketplace

Whether you're looking for love, offering enlightenment or desperately seeking sardines (Albanian), then Marxism Today's classified section is THE place to see and be seen. Through us you can reach 55,000 men and women from diverse walks of life, all shades of the Left and all parts of the country.

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(NB: Temporise, v.i. adopt indecisive or time-serving policy; avoid committing oneself, act so as to gain time; comply temporarily with requirements of occasion . . .)

Marxism Today Marketplace – you'd be a fool not to.

● **Middlesbrough**: "Whats Left in Cleveland". Saturday April 15 at St Marys Centre, Corporation Rd, Middlesbrough. A full day of discussions, exhibits and entertainments. Organised by Teeside CP in association with Marxism Today. Details: (0642) 827499.

● **Oxford**: Marxism Today event to mark the bicentenary of the French Revolution. Helpers wanted, contact Geoff Andrews, 49 Walton Street Oxford. Tel: (0865) 52835.

● **Manchester**: Marxism Today Discussion Group meets on the third Wednesday of every month, 7.45pm at Chorlton Park Evening Centre, Mauldeth Road. For details, phone (061) 445 6333.

● **National**: "Marxism Today – Live." A national conference to discuss and develop Marxism Today Discussion Groups and Events. A combination of practical and discussion sessions. On Saturday June 3, at 16 St John Street, London EC1. For full details and registration form contact Mark Perryman on (01) 608 0265 or write MT Live, 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY.

● **Dundee & Tayside**: Marxism Today Discussion Group meets monthly. For details of meetings, ring, (0382) 644385.

● **Kensington & Chelsea**: "New Times, New Politics". Meeting with Mark Perryman, member of Marxism Today Editorial Board. On Monday May 8, 8pm at Response, 300 Old Brompton Rd, Earls Court, London SW5. Organised by Kensington & Chelsea Marxism Today Group. Details, Tel: (01) 373 9897.

● **Sheffield**: Marxism Today readers group meets regularly. For details ring B. Davidson, (0742) 500613.

CYCLING

● **Put cycling on the public agenda**: Trafford Cycle Campaign, 6, Selworth Avenue, Sale, Cheshire. 061-973 1048.

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RATES AND DATES

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Deadline for the May issue:
3rd April 1989

Europe And Nation Little And Large

The European Community could mean not only centralisation but also decentralisation. There is no reason why it must become a supranational monolith. **Gwyn A Williams** argues that it can provide new opportunities for diversity and national difference

We in Wales live in the aftermath of the Pontypridd by-election, which Labour, with a plausible candidate and a major effort, safely won, though its majority slipped, and in which Plaid Cymru quadrupled its vote and quintupled its percentage, taking a good half of its gains from former Labour voters. We approach the Vale of Glamorgan contest: said to be critical to Labour's recovery. Inevitably, our eyes are fixed on Westminster.

If we go on looking only to Westminster, as we have done for 200 years, generally with the fixed stare a rabbit directs at a stoat, we can feel ourselves to be some small, freak people clinging to the lip of the Island of Britain in total dependence on this British state.

We are nothing of the kind. We are not alone. We are a European people and we belong to an army of small peoples, numbering many millions, who are becoming the fulcrum of the struggle to create a human Europe of the peoples.

It is necessary to look across the Channel. If we look across that Channel, we can't stop looking until we see Vladivostok. The momentous changes underway in the Soviet Union will prove momentous for the human race. Consider one dramatic decision. In the drive for *perestroika*, the Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Byelorussia, together with the Ural city of Sverdlovsk and the Tatar autonomous region, are to switch to full regional self-financing. They will take control of their own peoples and resources and the Soviet Union will have to renegotiate its relationships with them. They are to be the vanguard in the struggle to transform society. It is no doubt a measure of the difficulties *perestroika* faces that, at least in the Baltic republics, the implementation of that decision has been postponed.

Those Baltic republics have the bit between their teeth. Already, with the agreement and in some cases the encouragement of Moscow, they have recovered national flags, national anthems, national days; they are establishing the equality of their own languages and are trying to create their own citizenship. Two of them are talking of the right locally to veto central legislation. There will no doubt be trouble, but there is little doubt either that an effective compromise is in the making.

Despite our very different histories, it is worth taking a closer look at Estonia, smallest of the republics and the pace-maker. They are one and half million people; we are twice that number. Many of them are passionately concerned to maintain and develop their own language and culture in the face of the world language of Russian; many of our people are equally passionate about Welsh. They face a process of immigration and displacement, the threat of historical extinction, as bad as anything which the people of western Wales now face, even as much of urban Wales looks like becoming another Isle of Dogs. Forty percent of the

population of Estonia is non-Estonian; something like 37% of the population of Wales is non-Welsh. But note – at the critical vote in the Estonian Soviet, nearly every one of the representatives of the Russians in Estonia joined with native delegates to call for a genuinely self-governing Estonia, presumably because it was in their interests so to do. This is something we in Wales need to think hard about.

What has driven this Gorbachev generation is not only the renewal of the communist ideal, but brute necessity. They have learned the hard way that they cannot regenerate their society without radical constitutional reform. We are in the same predicament. To talk of 'constitutional tinkering' as a distraction is fundamentally to misread that predicament. There can be no regeneration of our society without a radical restructuring of government on this Island of Britain.

The necessity becomes more urgent as 1992 approaches. Some 18 months ago, the European Parliament, unreformed and constrained though it now is, passed a major resolution on the minority languages of Europe, which are spoken by some 80m people. It was a radical demand for serious action in their support. Such a resolution does not today have the force of European law, though after 1992 matters may be different. It has nevertheless gone to the Commission for submission to the states. As far as I know, this resolution passed unreported in the London or even the Welsh press. We learned of it only from our allies in the European Free alliance within the Rainbow Group in the European Parliament.

Only a few weeks ago, that same European Parliament passed an even more radical resolution. This time, it was at least mentioned in one Welsh newspaper. By a majority of 100, it called for real power to pass to the regions of Europe. It called for elected bodies to run those regions with the cash resources to manage their own affairs. The objective is to reduce the growing gap between richer and poorer regions. It argues that the gradual transfer of powers to the Community must be accompanied by decentralisation and suggests the creation of a second chamber or European senate of the regions.

The fiercest resistance came from a centralist Spaniard and an English Tory MEP. Two features particularly appalled the latter. The European Parliament declared that these powerful elected assemblies of the regions should be able in a number of instances to bypass their state governments, deal directly with the Commission and European agencies and help to shape Community policies on the regions. And it insisted on minimal requirements for the definition of a region, so that it should be a real entity not some public relations exercise. That, for example, the embryonic Welsh state which exists in the Welsh Office with its cluster of dependent quangos should be controlled by the people of Wales, not by



'If we look across the Channel, we can't stop looking until we see Vladivostok'



The Thirteenth State

The abolition of internal frontier controls scheduled for 1992 will have very different meanings for the citizens of the 12 EC countries to those it will have for the 16m non-EC nationals lawfully residing in the Community. Already 2m of the former have exercised their right to live and work in other countries within the EC. Their entitlement to family unity, to equal opportunity in employment and to all the social benefits of their host countries is guaranteed in EC law.

The position of non-EC nationals is the exact opposite. Even though they are fully-integrated into the labour market, albeit usually in the worst and lowest-paid jobs, and are subject to the same pressures to migrate as EC citizens, they have no right to cross frontiers to look for work. Nor do they have the absolute right to family unity enjoyed by

migrants who are EC nationals.

Whereas most of Britain's immigrants were Commonwealth citizens who, when they came, had the right to settle here; migrants to other EC countries, such as Turks and Kurds in West Germany, were primarily 'guestworkers': that is, people who were allowed to reside only as long as their labour was needed. This system had an important advantage for their 'host' country: it had only the most minimal responsibilities to these workers and their families. In effect, these 16m people constitute a 'thirteenth' state in the EC. They have no civic rights. They are unable to vote, and in some countries they cannot form political organisations. They are often prohibited from taking jobs in the public sector. Everywhere guestworkers are a focus for racism.

Unlike Britain, which has always relied mainly on ports of entry and government posts abroad for the enforcement of its immigra-

tion controls, most EC countries exercise controls inside their frontiers. Their internal controls include workplace checks on immigration status by employers, random checks by police in the streets and checks on people applying for benefit and public services. For Britain, one major effect of the harmonisation of immigration policies will be a rapid acceleration of the introduction of similar internal controls to those which have already begun to disfigure life and civil liberties here. Not far behind will be increased pressure for the introduction of ID cards and spot checks in the street on people assumed to be immigrants.

1992 is likely to mean a new 'Fortress Europe' surrounded by even stricter controls at the external borders of the EC, and harsher measures to keep tabs on guestworkers within. There will be pressure to co-ordinate rules on entry, residency, access to employment and entitlement to

civic rights. There will be a common visa requirement. Already EC ministers have drawn up a list of over 50 countries, largely Asian, African and East European, whose nationals will require visas to enter Britain. People from all black Commonwealth countries will find it increasingly difficult to make even short-term visits.

On all fronts the harmonisation of immigration procedures is settling for the most restrictive of current policies. It will continue to do so until there is a much more powerful demand, and not just from the marginalised and dispossessed, that all asylum-seekers and guestworkers living in the Community should enjoy the same rights as EC nationals. ●

Dave Cook

Whose Europe? - Racist Fortress or Equal Rights, a new broadsheet examining what the process of harmonisation is likely to mean. For details contact 'Whose Europe' c/o Refugee Forum, 54 Tavistock Place, London WC1 9RG. Tel: 01.482.3829.

Whitehall.

We are in for great storms as 1992 approaches, frontiers start to dissolve and state sovereignty begins to become redundant. Obviously 1992 poses the threat of yet greater centralisation of corporate power, yet more deprivation for neglected regions like Wales. It is precisely for this reason that the drive for what is called a social Europe, which Jacques Delors has come to personify, is gathering such power and momentum that the true bearers of the Thatcherite faith are becoming alarmed and hostile.

This campaign, which at the hands of those dedicated to a European unity in diversity is becoming something of a crusade, is in part a reaction against the advance of the Europe of the corporations, but in part a product of it. Globalisation and regionalisation are simultaneous processes within the evolution of that post-Fordist society which has been so cogently analysed in the pages of this journal. The newer technology, the newer styles of flexible production directed at consumers of infinite variety and producers of individualised and participatory skills, that whole complex of attitudes and actions which is turning the institutions and practices of both established labour and capital into dinosaurs, certainly can and does cut across states. It concentrates enormous power and decisive control in oligarchies whose decisions can spell death to whole regions and communities.

But the very same process is widely

dispersing production with a freedom and flexibility hitherto unknown. It certainly strives, of necessity, to scoop up un-organised and ill-defended pools of available labour, like the legions of underpaid and exploited women, but it also, of necessity, cultivates a myriad new skills and new workers who are beginning to assume the independence and the dignity often associated with pre-industrial craftsmen and artisans. In an almost classically marxist manner, this capitalism, of necessity, sows the seeds of its own transcendence, much as the social 'libertarian' thrust of Thatcherism opens up all manner of spaces for socialism to move into.

What is urgently needed is direct political intervention of a socialist character. It will need to be a socialism which has understood the society it lives in, which develops the kind of openness, flexibility, initiative and will which have enabled socialists to assume or share power in a dozen countries on the continent. The central foci of intervention will have to be the local or regional and the European, if possible simultaneously. What will not serve is the state structure of a single country; the old socialist obsession with using the state power of its own 'nation' is patently inadequate.

That is why socialists must commit themselves to the dedicated Europeans' drive for their 'social Europe'. Their objective is to create genuine regional self-government as a necessary complement to increased power at the European

centre, to reduce regional differences, to enshrine workers' rights and workers' participation, to establish women's rights, civil rights, the rights of small peoples.

Europe over the next decades is going to resemble Britain in the 17th century when parliament moved to wrest power from the crown. We face endless struggles over the general and the particular. The European Parliament, handicapped by the fifth column within it staffed by MEPs committed to the state power of their own countries, but assisted by its own fifth column within the Commission and the European agencies, will move to wrest power from the Council of Ministers of the states. Jacques Delors is probably correct to say that, by the end of the century, 80% of the decisions which will deeply affect our lives will be taken in Brussels and Strasbourg. What will those decisions be and who will make them? Running through the endless conflicts ahead will be the struggle to transform the Europe of the corporations and the states into what the European Free Alliance calls the 'Europe of the Peoples', which will be a 'Europe of the people'.

That struggle will not be confined to Western Europe. In it, the small peoples, the little, lost nations, will play a critical role, as radical Europeans well know.

The place of the people of Wales, certainly of Welsh socialists, is in that struggle. For there is one glaring exception to a general trend - the separatist and authoritarian British state we live under, which

'We are in for great storms as 1992 approaches, frontiers start to dissolve and state sovereignty begins to become redundant'



is offering an increasingly determined resistance to a social Europe, a real parliament for Europe, a disarmed Europe.

Nearly every other country in the EC is either an outright federation or grants major autonomy to its regions and minority peoples. The regime which rules us is driving an already over-centralised state into a veritable paroxysm of centralisation. It is relentlessly dismantling local government, eliminating regional democracy, subjecting every quasi-autonomous institution it can get its hands on. The state itself is nakedly invading civil liberties, granting menacing new powers to an already inflated and paranoid world of secret agencies and, in complacent arrogance, erecting a formidably authoritarian system of government – with the precise intention of letting the market loose into every corner of our lives in a process which, in the name of individual freedom, breeds barbarism at the bottom and corruption at the top and destroys all sense of community. Its presiding genius denies that society even exists.

We can see the consequences day by day in Wales, where we face a kind of communal death. There is only one way out. We have to take as much control as is humanly possible over our own society. This means, in the first instance, getting a grip on the Welsh Office and its associated agencies, which account for 80% of our public expenditure and do not answer to us.

This is entirely feasible. Thatcherite 'libertarianism' is riddled with contradictions into which we can burrow like Marx's Old Mole of Revolution. The most important of them for us is called Mr Peter Walker, the prime-minister-in-exile. As Dafydd Elis Thomas, president of Plaid Cymru has said, he is acting, no doubt in the service of his ambition to make his Wales what Birmingham was to Joseph Chamberlain, like a Welsh prime minister. His extraordinary performance, which has earned him massive popularity in Wales, has had several unexpected after-effects. His essentially non-Thatcherite styles have operated as something of a shield for the Welsh against the worst effects of his own government's policies. However real or unreal the consequences of his myriad 'initiatives', he has opened sceptical and resigned eyes to the real possibilities of Welsh self-management which exist; he has awoken a sense of self-help among a people bred over generations to dependence upon Westminster.

The creation of an elected Welsh assembly or parliament with real resources, to take over at least the powers of the Welsh Office, is within our capacity. We will need to mobilise a popular front in Wales, focusing in the first instance on a set of minimal objectives around which a majority can unite. We need to work with our friends and allies among the Scots and the many English now restive in their own regions. It will not be easy, but we can do it.

But it will not be enough, because any such victory will prove as transient as the achievements of 1945, anchored as it will be in this grotesque British state structure. Consider what we are up against. The present regime can use and build on an existing state structure which dates in its essence from the revolution called Glorious of 1688 which created that Glorious Constitution, universally hailed and endlessly celebrated as a miracle of human ingenuity which had solved the problems of combining order with progress, liberty with hierarchical authority. That constitution was substantially modified but not in essence transformed by the elimination of the confessional basis of the state over the crisis of 1828-35.

In consequence, we are the only country in Western Europe now where the sovereignty of the people does not exist even in theory. The people in this country are not sovereign. Sovereignty in this country resides in the Crown-in-Parliament, a constitutional fiction (though no fiction in the world of the secret agencies as we have seen!) which both symbolises and entrenches the real power of an endlessly flexible and evolving oligarchy, the governance of the great and the good, legitimised by two centuries of carefully-cultivated civic and parliamentary practices which are still endlessly celebrated in an odious self-satisfaction fully worthy of that 18th century which initiated it.

The oligarchy has shifted, changed and adapted over two centuries, now opening to admit selected new groups into the élite, now closing up again. We have no written constitution, because that might inhibit the inexhaustible good sense and creative flexibility of the oligarchy and its state government, which needs to be, and increasingly is, more and more removed from control and arbitrary in its action. Contrary to much of our platform rhetoric, we never won the vote in this country. The vote was doled out to us in carefully phased and rationed packages, so that the inner and essentially occult heartland of power survived unscathed. It has been an enormously successful regime, which has skilfully managed consensus through its junior partner of a parliament. A living demonstration of Gramsci's 'hegemony', it has conditioned the people of Britain into the belief that this regime, with its Westminster parliament and its allegedly unparalleled achievement of social peace and cohesion, is the only form of democracy which exists.

It faced two major crises in the 20th century, as social growth accelerated and 'mass society' developed. Both were related to relative decline and war or the threat of it: the upsurge of social Liberalism around 1900 and the breakthrough of Labour after 1945. Both achieved major changes and won major gains, but both were tamed, channelled and contained. As nation-states now lurch into their crisis of obsolescence and a reactionary regime here drives ahead in its ruthless counter-offensive, we can see that those gains

were, in the long run, precarious. This regime is undoing not only what Labour did and what Lloyd George did; it is even undoing what Victorian social reformers achieved. There is no safe hiding place from this state; at the very minimum we need to build a shelter against it more durable than the Puckish spirit of Mr Peter Walker.

Liberal and Labour achievements proved precarious because both, even at the peak of their power, accepted the essential structure of the British state, indeed, seemed unable even to conceive of an alternative. Their British state is now breaking the Labour Party as it did the Liberals. Unless Labour can cut free from its obsession with that state, it will go stumbling on, hypnotised by paltry and ephemeral opinion polls, with the red cross of historical doom, to quote Marx, stamped on its forehead.

This terrible experience has been a striking demonstration that the original marxist critique of social democracy was correct. We cannot use a state structure created to serve one system to build a radically different one. We have to dismantle this state and reconstruct government on this island so that power passes to its peoples. We can do that only if we make ourselves self-governing European peoples. The struggle to transform the EC offers us the opportunity.

In Wales, we need mentally and spiritually to renounce our allegiance to the British state and make ourselves into a self-governing European nation, eventually to stand alongside our sister-nations on this Island of Britain within a new Europe we have to fight to create. It will be a long and hard struggle, not least within our own selves.

We need to fight at every level on the terrain of this island alongside as many allies as we can find among the Scots and the English, but in the coming struggle, we must be prepared to act as a European fifth column within it. We must fight for a real presence in Europe. We have allies there in the European Free Alliance, which represents parties from 18 small peoples, a very mixed bunch, but one which is moving in the direction we need to follow and which works with the German Greens within the Rainbow Group. We will find plenty of allies elsewhere, notably among the German Social Democrats and the Italian Communists. The fact that even this current European Parliament could pass the resolutions on minority languages and regional self-management speaks for itself.

The two struggles are one. They are twin jaws of a nutcracker we must close to crunch on the British state. Those jaws are closing now. This state's powers have begun to drain away to Brussels. In its Northern Ireland province, it has been at war for 20 years. The Scots are going to drive this island into constitutional crises whether we like it or not. We in Wales have little choice. The alternative is a kind of death. ●

Revised version of an address to the launch meeting of the Campaign for a Welsh Assembly in November 1988

'The struggle will not be confined to Western Europe. In it, the small peoples, the little, lost nations, will play a crucial role'



Europe and Nation Coming In From The Cold

Gorbachev, global interdependence and Europeanisation are the new motors of international change. Thatcherism is being left behind. The Left, argues **Martin Jacques**, must abandon its island mentality if it is to help shape the new world

Britain has been a highly internationalised country for some two centuries. Its economy has been very dependent on trade: its imperial history rested on an extraordinary involvement with large parts of what we now describe as the Third World: its language is the most international of all languages. The product of this history is a paradox. Britain possesses to this day a highly internationalised economy and a very developed web of international commitments. Yet this is combined with a powerful insularity, a strong sense of xenophobia, much of which is a product of the unequal and dominant relationship which Britain once enjoyed as an imperial power, economically, militarily and culturally.

This sense of insularity and xenophobia has been under pressure throughout the postwar era as a result of Britain's irresistible relative decline. But it now faces a new set of pressures. They are not specific to Britain, but threaten to remake the world of the 90s, and indeed the 21st century, in very new terms. Not least they will profoundly undermine the postwar international settlement — the special relationship with the US, the old East-West relationship, the commitment to a notion of Britain as a powerful nation-state — which has framed Britain's foreign policy throughout the postwar period.

There are three major forces here that we can distinguish, although which obviously overlap. Firstly, there is the growing trend towards internationalisation and globalisation. This is not new. It has been a persistent tendency since the 50s, as evidenced by the growth of the international firm. But the capitalist crisis in the 70s gave it a new meaning and momentum. It accelerated the trend towards global markets; it stimulated the development of leading-edge technologies such as semi-conductors, robotics and microchips whose production and markets were highly internationalised; it paved the way towards a far more global monetary system. These developments have greatly enhanced the economic interdependence of national economies such that it is no longer possible for the average European nation-state to pursue national economic policies in the old way, because of the spill-over effect from other economies.

Although this trend towards globalisation is most obviously economically-driven, it cannot be reduced to the economic either in its causes or in its effects. Take for example the growth of an increasingly internationalised culture, with the spread of satellite television or the growth of English as an international language. We live in an era in which Paris, with the opening of the Channel Tunnel, could feel almost as close to London as Manchester; when events in one part of the globe can be brought live to your sitting room; where foreign travel, even to Third World

destinations, has become commonplace; when a nuclear meltdown in one country affects a whole continent; where the corruption of oceans can affect the balance of our planet's ecosystem. In short, globalisation is accompanied by a new sense of global intimacy and interdependence.

This tendency towards globalisation has been accompanied by a parallel, often conflicting tendency towards localisation. As power moves upwards from the nation-state towards larger international units, be it the international firm, regional entities like the EC, or transnational organisations such as the IMF and Nato, so there is also a countervailing pressure, whose roots are various, for it to move downwards. Regions and cities have acquired their own economic leverage with international firms, with the decline in the power of the nation-state and the rise of more intense global competition for inward investment. There is a new search for identity and difference in the face of impersonal global forces, which is leading to the emergence of new national and ethnic demands. The most striking example of this trend within Britain is the slow erosion of the 'British' identity as it is besieged by the rise of Scottish, and to a lesser extent, Welsh nationalism, though in this instance it is also a revolt against the antiquated British state with its extraordinary degree of centralisation.

The second new pressure we can identify is the break-up of the old bipolar world which dominated the postwar international scene until it began to lose some of its purchase in the early 70s. The decline of this bipolar settlement was postponed by the onset of the second cold war at the end of the 70s, which resulted from the cold-war mentality of Reaganism and the immobilism and backwardness of Brezhnevism. The emergence of Gorbachev has now transformed that situation.

Gorbachev heralds the break-up of the bipolar world, the blocs in their old inert form, and the bloc mentality itself. The Soviet Union has abandoned its military/hegemonic ambitions in the Third World and it is now evident that it intends to allow the East European countries to more or less go their own way. Gorbachev heralds a world of interdependence where the old autarchic bloc mentality has no place, where nations and peoples must not just co-exist but interact and co-operate, where relations must be informed by universal human values. Of course, we should not forget that the turn by the Soviet Union away from the bloc ideology is also driven by its economic difficulties. The fact is that it can no longer afford to live in the old way, spending enormous sums of money on the armed forces, and intervening outside its own borders when it felt its own hegemonic aspirations were threatened.

But the pressure for change in this context does not come from the Soviet Union

alone. The US can no longer afford to be the kind of hegemonic power it was in earlier decades. Already, by 1975 and its defeat in Vietnam, it was evident the US could no longer afford such large-scale military involvement. Reagan attempted to revive US ambitions, but economic reality, notably in the form of the twin deficits, is forcing it to retreat. Over the next decade we will witness a process by which the US slowly disengages itself from the kind of commitments it has sustained in Western Europe in the postwar period. This is partly because it can no longer afford them. But two other factors are also working here: the growing independence and power of Western Europe itself, and the fact that the locus of international economic power is shifting eastwards to the Pacific Rim, notably Japan and newly-industrialising countries like Taiwan and Singapore, with states like China and India in the background, thereby pushing American sights westwards across the Pacific rather than eastwards over the Atlantic.

Now the breakdown of the bipolar world is undermining the assumptions of British postwar foreign and defence policy. These involved Britain being an integral, and in some senses senior, partner in the Nato alliance, directed against the Soviet Union. But the Soviet threat as previously conceived is palpably disappearing before our very eyes. In the 90s, assuming that present trends are sustained, the cold war will no longer be an adequate basis for the formulation of the main contours of our foreign policy. This will mark a shift of epochal dimensions.

The third pressure which is transforming the shape of the world, and Britain's place within it, is the trend towards Europeanisation. This is of course not new: it started in the 50s. But it stalled in the 70s, and has now acquired a new momentum with the move towards a single market in 1992. The process of Europeanisation can be seen in the long run as mainly a response to internationalisation on the one hand and the decline of the nation-state, and specifically the European nation-state, on the other. It is the failure to appreciate this long-term historic reality on Left and Right, which has made Britain such a belated and reluctant actor on the European scene. It is now clear that the growth of the European Community is set to transform the very shape of our continent and profoundly weaken the traditional European nation-state, which historically defines in many respects the very notion of the nation-state itself. 1992 will be a key moment in this process. Not least, like Gorbachev, it is a symbolic moment as well as a real one, helping us to understand the underlying processes and thereby also serving to hasten their development.

Thatcherism's relationship to these three pressures has been fundamentally regressive. Its most positive

'While Thatcher has skilfully sought to do business with Gorbachev, she has stubbornly clung to the old cold-war framework'



aspect was the recognition in the 70s of the new international competitive pressures and the need for Britain to adapt to a new international division of labour. But this was combined with a championing of the old chauvinistic, bulldog little-Englandism. Similarly, while Thatcher has skilfully sought to do business with Gorbachev, she has stubbornly clung to the old cold-war framework and been the foremost advocate of its greatest military symbol, nuclear weapons.

Finally, Thatcherism has always been the reluctant European — for two main reasons. Firstly, at its core Thatcherism is an ideology of little-Englandism. It is the latter which frames its strategy. It always thinks first in terms of nation-state. Now that is palpably no longer possible. It is therefore the reluctant European, unable to generate any kind of European strategy of its own. Secondly, Thatcherism knows that when it comes to the EC it is out of step. Only in Britain is neo-liberalism so rampant and unadulterated when it comes to government strategy.

Thatcherism can only be properly understood in the context of the paradox raised earlier: that while Britain is in some respects a highly internationalised society, that internationalisation has been shaped and distorted by narrow national chauvinism and supremacism, an increasingly misplaced notion that Britain is best and knows best. Thatcherism's commitment to internationalisation is basically economic, to the free play of international market forces. In the political and cultural domains, Thatcherism is determinedly nationalistic, racist, patriarchal and parochial. One of the most striking examples of this is Thatcherism's protective attitude towards the apartheid regime in South Africa. Nothing more clearly symbolises Thatcherism's relationship to Britain's imperial past and its racist legacy.

But what informs Thatcherism has also left its mark more generally on our political culture. It could hardly have been very different. After all, we are speaking here of at least 200 years of history. The Left is no exception. It too has been marked by the paradox of a shared imperial past. It remains strikingly insular in its character. The Labour Party, for instance, has always been remarkably ignorant of what is happening in other West European countries, not least in terms of the thinking and experiments of the Left. This insularity has tended to blind it to the process of internationalisation. In the face of Europeanisation, it sought refuge for a long time in the arms of national sovereignty. It misread which way history was moving.

The impact on Britain of the three pressures we have outlined will be profound. Firstly, it will, over the course of the 90s, force some kind of transformation in Britain's foreign policy. Secondly,



Claude Munoz

and more fundamentally, it will radically alter the meaning of, and distinction between, foreign and domestic, the international and the national.

The starting-point here must be this new balance between the national and the international. The trend towards internationalisation means that power is now frequently located outside the realm of the nation-state. There is no point in the Left seeking to resist this trend, which has been its instinct in the past. It must go with the grain of internationalisation, which has acquired fresh momentum since the crisis of the 70s. The outcome of this process can be progressive or reactionary, depending, in the time-honoured phrase, on the balance of political forces.

Let us take a relatively neglected example of the problem: the international firm. It would, in general, be ineffective and positively harmful to nationalise the relevant branch of the international firm operating in this country, and thereby rip apart the fabric of worldwide economic ties and deepening co-operation between national economies. The problem posed by



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the international firm — which, lest we forget, dominates the internationally competitive sector of our economy — cannot be resolved at a national level. The socialisation of the international firm, whatever this might precisely mean in practice, has to be thought of in regional or even global terms.

As far as Britain is concerned, undoubtedly the key dimension in this new division of labour is Europe. An increasing range of questions which were once dealt with at national level must now be conceived of in terms of the European Community. It makes little sense to think of key environmental problems like acid rain in national terms. For some, like the ozone layer, not even a European response is adequate: only a global approach can hope to match the scale of the problem. For major industries like telecommunications, there is no longer any such thing as a national solution. A European perspective is essential.

The evolution of this European dimension, however, remains highly problematic. The Thatcherite view, expressed most cogently in the prime minister's Bruges speech, conceives of the EC as little more than a giant free market. It wants to restrict the role of the EC institutions, and minimise social intervention and regulation. In this, for a combination of reasons, it is unlikely to succeed.

But equally, the Left is certainly not in the driver's seat. Social Europe is still more of a dream than a reality, lagging well behind the 1992 prospectus of a single market. Moreover, as the EC institutions acquire more power, which they undoubtedly will over the next decade, their unaccountable nature will pose an increasingly important democratic problem. So far, the democratic problem has largely been seen in terms of national sovereignty versus Brussels. But the real question will increasingly be the accountability of the EC institutions. Here there are real dangers. The EC could evolve as a mighty oligarchy with the peoples of the EC countries having precious little control over what they do. Alternatively, a different picture could begin to take shape, with a far more powerful European Parliament and an elected Commission. Of course, EC institutions which enjoy a popular mandate will also enjoy far more authority and therefore further undercut national sovereignty. But that is the choice which the European Left should make.

The point to stress here is that the future of the EC remains open-ended. Its evolution will be a continual process of contestation. Social Europe is one area. The democratic deficit is another. The question of whether or not the EC acquires its own defence capacity, and what that might be, is a further example. Then again there is the future composition of the EC. Will the EC expand to embrace the EFTA countries, Cyprus, Morocco

'The EC could evolve as a mighty oligarchy with the peoples of the EC countries having precious little control over what they do.'



and Turkey, for instance? If it does, it will become a very different organism from what it is now, embracing a very different ethnic and religious conception of Europe. Further, there is the question of the relationship between the EC and Eastern Europe, which has been thrown into the melting-pot by Gorbachev's renunciation of the traditional client relationship between these states and the Soviet Union. Will the EC become in effect the engine-room of European growth and cast those states around it into some kind of subordinate and second-class relationship, or will Europe acquire an increasingly cohesive and pluralistic character, that of a common European home?

This list of issues is far from exhaustive. But it serves to indicate how the parameters of the EC's development remain indeterminate. What is clear is that both the Left's traditional defence of national sovereignty and the Thatcherite commitment to the EC as a free market have little purchase on the future of the EC. More generally, the process of Europeanisation undermines the traditional line of division in our political thinking between the international and the national, and must, at a minimum, transform at least the form of the paradox described earlier.

There is one further point worth making here. A key problem facing the Left if it wishes to be a serious protagonist in the European process is that culturally it remains deeply national in character. Compared with capital, the unions have found it extraordinarily difficult to develop international forms of co-operation, action and organisation. Socialist and communist parties, whatever the internationalist rhetoric, remain deeply national institutions. And while that remains the case, it is difficult to see the Left becoming a powerful actor on the EC stage. That concerted forms of action on a European as opposed to national stage are possible is borne out by the peace movement in the early 80s and the green movement in the last few years. But what a Europeanisation of the culture of labour movements might mean, remains a virtually undiscussed question.

Europeanisation does not exhaust the question of Britain's relationship to the internationalisation process. It provides a new frame, a new context. But the EC still remains an institution with limited powers. Moreover, there are many problems which cannot be resolved at a regional level. New global problems, notably the ecological threat, not least in the Third World, require new forms of co-operation which go well beyond what is achievable on a regional basis. The problem of North-South must also be seen in this light. Clearly, the EC can undoubtedly make a contribution to this problem, one it has largely avoided making in the past. But it also requires new global agreements, for example a general moratorium on the payment of Third World debt, or a

global agreement by the advanced countries, East and West, to assist the Third World countries in the search for a CFC substitute.

Similarly, new global possibilities, notably in the scientific and technical sphere, space research being an obvious example, necessitate new and different forms of global co-operation. It is unclear what forms such global and multinational co-operation might take, but immediately they suggest two things. Firstly, the role of the United Nations and its agencies could be greatly expanded. Secondly, the process of global co-operation should not be viewed as one confined to intergovernmental channels, but as a conversation between societies.

The third pressure alluded to at the outset was the end of bipolarism and the emergence of a more multipolar world. The breakdown of the old East-West division drives a horse and carriage through the postwar international settlement. What will emerge to replace it remains to be seen. One of course cannot rule out some kind of regression, linked to Gorbachev's own position in the Soviet Union. But assuming this does not happen, then the most obvious casualty, in the British context, must be the Right. The whole basis of our foreign and defence policy is now under enormous pressure. What is needed is a new disarmament initiative from the Left which combines unilateral, bilateral and multilateral measures.

The three processes outlined at the beginning — internationalisation, Europeanisation and the breakdown of the old bipolar world — will transform Britain's relationship with the world outside of itself and therefore its own identity. The political effects are already visible. At the end of the 70s, and indeed into the early 80s, Thatcherism succeeded in setting the political agenda in this area, as in so many others. At the end of the 80s, it no longer looks like that. It is on the defensive in relation to Europe. It is on the defensive in the face of the Gorbachev crusade. It has sought to ride the green tide, but looks distinctly uncomfortable with it.

It is difficult to avoid the observation that the Left is now presented with a historic opportunity. At least two of the forces now under way, namely Europeanisation and the end of the cold war, are serving to weaken Thatcherism. Internationalisation is more ambiguous in its impact. The paradox between on the one hand Britain's internationalisation on the one hand and its xenophobia on the other could potentially find a new and more progressive resolution. But it is not inevitable. Just as Thatcherism was a reactionary settlement of this contradiction in the context of the internationalisation dynamic of the 70s, so the Right could transform itself again. The question is whether the Left can come to terms with these momentous new forces and carry through its own intellectual and cultural revolution. ●

Marlene Dietrich

It is impossible to dissociate Marlene Dietrich from the Berlin of 1929. For Joseph von Sternberg, director of *The Blue Angel*, 'the woman who was to charm the world' evoked the city of Beardsley, Baudelaire and Huysmans: artists and poets of decadence but also of modernity. Today, Marlene Dietrich, aptly described by one contemporary journalist as 'a myth, a symbol, an idea', still speaks the fascination of that historical moment, poised between the doomed world of the Weimar Republic and the onset of a new era, between the Berlin and the Hollywood studios.

When Marlene Dietrich arrived in New York on April 9, 1930, accompanied by Joseph von Sternberg, the triumphant success of *The Blue Angel* had preceded her. 'Sign Dietrich' was the verdict of a group of Paramount executives immediately after *The Blue Angel's* screening. Dietrich was to be the answer to MGM's Garbo, and the latest addition to the various waves of Europeans who had crossed the Atlantic to Hollywood.

'Marlene signified not just Berlin but Europe: the transgressive "modern" sexuality powerfully combined with ideas of decadence and impending political doom'

Between 1930 and 1935, Marlene and von Sternberg made another six films together: *Morocco*, *Blonde Venus*, *Dishonoured*, *The Scarlet Empress*, *Shanghai Express*, and *The Devil Is A Woman*. Though these constitute an extraordinarily coherent and formally brilliant body of work, they do not, and neither do her subsequent films, explain her lasting fame. Marlene has had more than 50 books written about her, been scrutinised by semi-logical and psychological

analyses and become a cult for gay subcultures as well as straight male film buffs. She is an international icon even for those who have never laid eyes on her films.

The Marlene of popular mythology has little to do with Maria Magdalena Dietrich (born 1901), a modest actress in routine Weimar melodramas, nor with the subsequently respected 'pro' of Hollywood studios, the anti-Nazi performer who was awarded the medal for freedom by the US war department in 1947, the good mother and good cook (Jean Gabin particularly liked her stuffed cabbage).

Marlene's most precious baggage when she arrived in Los Angeles was Lola-Lola, the sleazy cabaret singer and 'petty-bourgeois Berlin tart' (in the words of Siegfried Kracauer) who, with a few flashes of her suspender belts, nonchalantly reduced Emil Jannings to a pathetic wreck at the end of *The Blue Angel*.

Despite the rapid 'cleansing' and streamlining of her image and poor reception of that film in the USA, Marlene's aura remained that of nightclubs, transvestites, and prostitutes, a heady mixture of lower depths and glamour associated with 1920s' Berlin. The German capital of mass cultural entertainment was also a city of intellectuals: for Harold Nicholson it epitomised 'restless movement' and the collision of the old with the new; playwright Carl Zuckmayer compared it to 'a highly desirable woman'. Marlene signified this mixture of old and new that characterised not just Berlin but Europe from an American point of view: the transgressive 'modern' sexuality (in particular androgyny) of 1920s' Berlin and Paris, powerfully combined with ideas of decadence and impending political doom.

Von Sternberg understood the centrality of this allegorical function. Marlene was made to fit Hollywood stan-



Marlene Dietrich: Anticipated modern ideas of sexual identity

dards of glamour, but her characters were still 'exotically' European – German in *Blonde Venus*, Russian in *The Scarlet Empress*, Spanish in *The Devil Is A Woman*, beyond the (real) need to justify her accent and get past the censors. This allowed the films to celebrate, if ironically, American values, but also to dwell on illicit male pleasures and on male anxieties of social and sexual destitution by projecting them on to a scandalous foreign woman. Sexual promiscuity stood for political aberration.

Dietrich was, however, no downtrodden plaything. Her appeal resided precisely in the power of her cool narcissism, enshrined in close-ups, milky lighting and low-angle shots. Her scripts undermined traditional gender definitions, making her turn the tables on her male partners, often by the sardonic repetition of bits of their dialogue. She was the 'phallic mother', both caressing and cracking the whip, a classic male fantasy yet one that women spectators (who, after all, have

mothers too), have also reclaimed.

What also stopped Marlene from being just a convenient space for male projections was her distancing humour and delight in artifice. Anticipating modern ideas of sexual identity by several decades, she emphasised the construction of her own image: her sculpted face mask-like, her slim body alternatively clad in the cliché fetishes of femininity (feathers and furs) or the ironic emblems of masculinity (top hats and tuxedos), both on and off screen.

Marlene's initial success was precisely located in Hollywood's notion of the 'old world', her Germanity toned down and yet essential to her Hollywood image. But it is her opaqueness and refusal of a fixed identity which now makes her such a powerful icon in our post-modern culture obsessed with surfaces, an icon that can be 'read' in very different ways and appropriated by very different subcultural groups. ●
Ginette Vincendeau



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